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THE WORKS OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

TUSITALA EDITION

VOL. XXXIII

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VOLUME THREE

EDITED BY

SIR SIDNEY COLVIN

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VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

September, 1884—August, 1887

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

VIII

LIFE AT BOURNEMOUTH

ARRIVING in England at the end of July, 1884, Stevenson took up his quarters first for a few weeks at Richmond. He was compelled to abandon the hope of making his permanent home at Hyères, partly by the renewed failure there of his own health, partly by a bad outbreak of cholera which occurred in the old Provençal town about the time he left it. After consultation with several doctors, all of whom held out hopes of ultimate recovery despite the gravity of his present symptoms, he moved to Bournemouth. Here he found in the heaths and pinewoods some distant semblance of the landscape of his native Scotland, and in the sandy curves of the Channel coast a passable substitute for the bays and promontories of his beloved Mediterranean. At all events, he liked the place well enough to be willing to try it for a home; and such it became for all but three years, from September, 1884, to August, 1887. These, although in the matter of health the worst and most trying years of his life, were in the matter of work some of the most active and successful. For the first two or three months the Stevensons occupied a lodging on the West Cliff called Wensleydale; for the next five, from mid-November, 1884, to mid-April, 1885, they were tenants of a house named Bonallie Towers, pleasantly situated amid the pinewoods of Branksome Park, and by its name recalling familiar Midlothian associations. Lastly, about Easter, 1885, they entered into occupation

of a house of their own, given by the elder Mr. Stevenson as a special gift to his daughter-in-law, and renamed by its new occupants Skerryvore, in reminiscence of one of the great lighthouse works carried out by the family firm off the Scottish coast.

During all the time of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth he was compelled to lead the life, irksome to him above all men, but borne with invincible spirit and patience, of a chronic invalid and almost constant prisoner to the house. A great part of his time had perforce to be spent in bed, and there almost all his literary work was produced. Often for days, and sometimes for whole weeks together, he was forbidden to speak aloud, and compelled to carry on conversation with his family and friends in whispers or with the help of pencil and paper. The few excursions to a distance which he attempted—most commonly to my house at the British Museum, once to Cambridge, once to Matlock, once to Exeter, and once in 1886 as far as Paris —these excursions generally ended in a breakdown and a hurried retreat to home and bed. Nevertheless, he was able in intervals of comparative ease to receive and enjoy the visits of friends from a distance both old and new—among the most welcome of the latter being Mr. Henry James, Mr. William Archer, and Mr. John S. Sargent; while among Bournemouth residents who attached themselves to him on terms of special intimacy and affection were Sir Percy and Lady Shelley and Sir Henry and Lady Taylor and their daughters.

At the same time, seizing and making the most of every week, nay, every day and hour of respite, he contrived to produce work surprising alike, under the circumstances, by quantity and quality. During the first two months of his life at Bournemouth the two plays *Admiral Guinea* and *Beau Austin* were written in collaboration with Mr. Henley, and many other dramatic schemes were broached which health and leisure failed him to carry out. In the course of the next few months he finished *Prince Otto*, *The Child's Garden of Verses*, and *More New Arabian Nights*, all three of which had been begun, and the two first almost com-

pleted, before he left Hyères. He at the same time attacked two new tasks—a highway novel called *The Great North Road*, and a *Life of Wellington* for a series edited by Mr. Andrew Lang, both of which he had in the sequel to abandon ; and a third, the boys' story of *Kidnapped*, which in its turn had to be suspended, but on its completion the following year turned out one of the most brilliant of his successes.

About midsummer of 1885 he was distressed by the sudden death of his old and kind friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin, and after a while undertook the task of writing a memoir of him to be prefixed to his collected papers. Towards the close of the same year he was busy with what proved to be the most popular of all his writings, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and with the Christmas story of *Olalla*. *Jekyll and Hyde* was published in January, 1886, and after threatening for the first week or two to fall flat, in no long time caught the attention of all classes of readers, was quoted from a hundred pulpits, and made the writer's name familiar to multitudes both in England and America whom it had never reached before. A success scarcely inferior, though of another kind, was made a few months afterwards by *Kidnapped*, which Stevenson had taken up again in the early spring, and which was published about midsummer. After completing this task in March, he was able to do little work during the remainder of the year, except in preparing materials for the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and in writing occasional verses which helped to make up the collection published in the following year under the title *Underwoods*. In the early autumn of the same year, 1886, he took a longer and more successful excursion from home than usual, staying without breakdown for two or three weeks at the Monument, as he always called my house at the British Museum, and seeing something of kindred spirits among his elders, such as Mr. Robert Browning, Mr. J. R. Lowell, the painters Burne-Jones and W. B. Richmond, and others who had hitherto delighted in his work, and now learned to delight no less in his society.

Thence he went with Mr. Henley for a short trip to Paris, chiefly in order to see the sculptor Rodin and his old friends Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Low. From this trip he returned none the worse, but during all the later autumn and winter at Bournemouth was again hampered in his work by renewed and prolonged attacks of illness. A further cause of trouble was the distressing failure of his father's health and spirits, attended by symptoms which plainly indicated the beginning of the end.

For some weeks of April, 1887, he was much taken up with a scheme which had nothing to do with literature. He had, as we have seen, taken deeply to heart both what he thought the guilty remissness of Government action in the matter of the Soudan garrisons and of Gordon, and the tameness of acquiescence with which the national conscience appeared to take the results. He had been not less disturbed at the failure of successive administrations to assert the reign of law in Ireland. He was no blind partisan of the English cause in that country, and had even written of the hereditary hatred of Irish for English as a sentiment justified by the facts of history. But he held strongly that private warfare, the use of dynamite and the knife, with the whole system of agrarian vengeances and the persecution of the weak, were means which no end could justify; and that redress of grievances, whatever form it might ultimately take, must be preceded by the re-establishment of law. In *More New Arabian Nights*, published the year before, he had endeavoured "to make dynamite ridiculous if he could not make it horrible," and to the old elements of fantastic invention, and humorously solemn realism in the unreal, had added the new element of a witty and scornful criminal psychology. A case that now appealed to him with especial force was that of the persecution kept up against the widow and daughters of the murdered man Curtin. He determined that if no one else would take up the duty of resisting such persecution without regard to consequences, he would take it up himself, in the hope of more effectually rousing the public conscience to the evils of the time. His plan was to go with his family,

occupy and live upon the derelict farm, and let happen what would. This, as the letters referring to the matter plainly show, was no irresponsible dream or whim, but a purpose conceived in absolute and sober earnest. His wife and household were prepared to follow, though under protest, had he persisted; as it seemed for some weeks that he certainly would, until at last the arguments of his friends, and above all the unmistakable evidence that his father's end was near, persuaded him to give up his purpose. But to the last, I think he was never well satisfied that in giving way he had not been a coward, preferring fireside ease and comfort to the call of a public duty.

After spending a part of the winter at Bournemouth and a part at Torquay, both Stevenson's parents returned to Edinburgh in April, 1887; and within a few weeks after their arrival he was summoned north to his father's death-bed. After spending at Edinburgh the short time necessary for the dispatch of business, he returned to his own sickroom life at Skerryvore.

During the two years and nine months of Stevenson's residence at Bournemouth, preceding the date of his father's death, he had made no apparent progress towards recovery. Every period of respite had been quickly followed by a relapse, and all his work, brilliant and varied as it was, had been done under conditions which would have reduced almost any other man to inactivity. The close and frequently recurring struggles against the danger of death from hemorrhage and exhaustion, which he had been used, when they first occurred, to find exciting, grew in the long run merely irksome, and even his persistent high courage and gaiety, sustained as they were by the devoted affection of his wife and many friends, began occasionally, for the first time, to fail him. Accordingly, when in May, 1887, the death of his father severed the strongest of the ties which bound him to the old country, he was very ready to listen to the advice of his physicians, who were unanimous in thinking his case not hopeless, but urged him to try some complete change of climate, surroundings, and mode of life. His wife's connections pointing to the West, he

thought of the mountain health-resorts of Colorado, and of their growing reputation for the cure of lung patients. Having let his house at Bournemouth, he accordingly took passage on board the s.s. *Ludgate Hill*, sailing for New York from London on August 21st, 1887, with his whole party, consisting of his wife, his widowed mother, whom they had persuaded to join them, his young stepson, and a trusted servant, Valentine Roch. The concluding letters of the present section tell of the preparations for this departure.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, Sunday 28th September, 1884

My dear People,—I keep better, and am to-day downstairs for the first time. I find the lockers entirely empty; not a cent to the front. Will you pray send us some? It blows an equinoctial gale, and has blown for nearly a week. Nimbus Britannicus; piping wind, lashing rain; the sea is a fine colour, and wind-bound ships lie at anchor under the Old Harry rocks, to make one glad to be ashore.

The Henleys are gone, and two plays practically done. I hope they may produce some of the ready.—I am, ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Andrew Chatto

During the earlier Bournemouth days were firmly established Stevenson's cordial relations with the several English publishers, Cassell & Co., Chatto & Windus, and Longmans, and a little later with Charles Scribner's Sons in America.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, October 3, 1884

Dear Mr. Chatto,—I have an offer of £25 for *Otto* from America. I do not know if you mean to have the American rights; from the nature of the contract, I think not; but if you understood that you were to sell the sheets, I will either hand over the bargain to you, or finish it myself and hand you over the money if you are pleased with the amount. You see, I leave this quite in your hands. To parody an old Scotch story of servant and master: if you don't know that you have a good author, I know that I have a good publisher. Your fair, open, and handsome dealings are a good point in my life, and do more for my crazy health than has yet been done by any doctor.—Very truly yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To W. E. Henley

There is no certain clue to the date of the following; neither has it been possible to make sure what was the enclosure mentioned. The special illness referred to seems to be that of the preceding May at Hyères.

[*Wensleydale, Bournemouth, October*, 1884 ?]

Dear Boy,—I trust this finds you well; it leaves me so-so. The weather is so cold that I must stick to bed, which is rotten and tedious, but can't be helped.

I find in the blotting book the enclosed, which I wrote to you the eve of my blood. Is it not strange? That night, when I naturally thought I was coopered, the thought of it was much in my mind; I thought it had gone; and I thought what a strange prophecy I had made in jest, and how it was indeed like to be the end of many letters. But I have written a good few since, and the spell is broken. I am just as pleased, for I earnestly desire to live. This pleasant middle age into whose port we are steering is quite to my fancy. I would cast anchor here, and go ashore for twenty years, and see the manners of the place. Youth was a great time, but somewhat fussy. Now in middle age (bar lucre) all seems mighty placid. It likes me; I spy a little bright café in one corner of the port, in front of which I now propose we should sit down. There is just enough of the bustle of the harbour and no more; and the ships are close in, regarding us with stern-windows—the ships that bring deals from Norway and parrots from the Indies. Let us sit down here for twenty years, with a packet of tobacco and a drink, and talk of art and women. By-and-by, the whole city will sink, and the ships too, and the table, and we also; but we shall have sat for twenty years and had a fine talk; and by that time, who knows? exhausted the subject.

I send you a book which (or I am mistook) will please you; it pleased me. But I do desire a book of adventure—a romance—and no man will get or write me one. Dumas I have read and re-read too often; Scott, too, and I am

short. I want to hear swords clash. I want a book to begin in a good way ; a book, I guess, like *Treasure Island*, alas ! which I have never read, and cannot though I live to ninety. I would God that some one else had written it ! By all that I can learn, it is the very book for my complaint. I like the way I hear it opens ; and they tell me John Silver is good fun. And to me it is, and must ever be, a dream unrealised, a book unwritten. O my sighings after romance, or even Skeltery, and O ! the weary age which will produce me neither !

CHAPTER I

The night was damp and cloudy, the ways foul. The single horseman, cloaked and booted, who pursued his way across Willesden Common, had not met a traveller, when the sound of wheels——

CHAPTER I

" Yes, sir," said the old pilot, " she must have dropped into the bay a little afore dawn. A queer craft she looks."

" She shows no colours," returned the young gentleman musingly.

" They're a-lowering of a quarter-boat, Mr. Mark," resumed the old salt. " We shall soon know more of her."

" Ay," replied the young gentleman called Mark, " and here, Mr. Seadrift, comes your sweet daughter Nancy tripping down the cliff."

" God bless her kind heart, sir," ejaculated old Seadrift.

CHAPTER I

The notary, Jean Rossignol, had been summoned to the top of a great house in the Isle St. Louis to make a will ; and now, his duties finished, wrapped in a warm roquelaure and with a lantern swinging from one hand, he issued from the mansion on his homeward way. Little did he think what strange adventures were to befall him !——

That is how stories should begin. And I am offered HUSKS instead.

What should be :	What is :
The Filibuster's Cache.	Aunt Anne's Tea Cosy.
Jerry Abershaw.	Mrs. Brierly's Niece.
Blood Money : A Tale.	Society : A Novel.

R. L. S.

To Sir Walter Simpson

I cannot remember who was Lawson (? Sir Wilfred) nor what his pamphlet was about.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth
[first week of November, 1884]

My dear Simpson,—At last, after divers adventures here we are : not Pommery and Greno as you see, " but jist plain auld Bonellie, no very faur frae Jenniper Green," as I might say if I were writing to Charles. I hope now to receive a good bundle from you ere long ; and I will try to be both prompt and practical in response. I hope to hear your boy is better : ah, that's where it bites, I know, that is where the childless man rejoices ; although, to confess fully, my whole philosophy of life renounces these renunciations ; I am persuaded we gain nothing in the least comparable to what we lose, by holding back the hand from any province of life ; the intrigue, the imbroglio, such as it is, was made for the plunger and not for the teetotaler. And anyway I hope your news is good.

I have nearly finished Lawson's most lively pamphlet. It is very clear and interesting. For myself, I am in our house—a home of our own, in a most lovely situation, among forest trees, where I hope you will come and see us and find me in a repaired and more comfortable condition—greatly pleased with it—rather hard-up, verging on the dead-broke—and full tilt at hammering up some New Arabians for the pot.

I wonder what you do without regular habits of work. I

am capable of only two theories of existence: the industrious worker's, the spreester's; all between seems blank to me. We grow too old, and I, at least, am too much deteriorated, for the last; and the first becomes a bedrock necessary. My father is in a gloomy state and has the yellow flag at the peak, or the fore, or wherever it should be; and he has just emptied some melancholy vials on me; I am also, by way of change, spitting blood. This somewhat clouds the termination of my note.—Yours ever affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THE REV. PROFESSOR LEWIS CAMPBELL

In reply to a gift of books, including the correspondent's well-known translation of Sophocles.

[*Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November,* 1884]

MY DEAR CAMPBELL,—The books came duly to hand. My wife has occupied the translation ever since, nor have I yet been able to dislodge her. As for the primer, I have read it with a very strange result: that I find no fault. If you knew how, dogmatic and pugnacious, I stand warden on the literary art, you would the more appreciate your success and my—well, I will own it—disappointment. For I love to put people right (or wrong) about the arts. But what you say of Tragedy and of Sophocles very amply satisfies me; it is well felt and well said; a little less technically than it is my weakness to desire to see it put, but clear and adequate. You are very right to express your admiration for the resource displayed in Œdipus King; it is a miracle. Would it not have been well to mention Voltaire's interesting onslaught, a thing which gives the best lesson of the difference of neighbour arts?—since all his criticisms, which had been fatal to a narrative, do not amount among them to exhibit one flaw in this masterpiece of drama. For the drama, it is perfect; though such a fable in a romance might make the reader crack his sides, so imperfect, so ethereally slight is the

verisimilitude required of these conventional, rigid, and egg-dancing arts.

I was sorry to see no more of you ; but shall conclude by hoping for better luck next time. My wife begs to be remembered to both of you.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

The " Arabs " mentioned below are the stories comprised in the volume *More New Arabian Nights : The Dynamiter*, written by Stevenson and his wife in collaboration.

Wensleydale, Bournemouth, November, 1884

DEAR HENLEY,—We are all to pieces in health, and heavily handicapped with Arabs. I have a dreadful cough, whose attacks leave me *aetat.* 90. I never let up on the Arabs, all the same, and rarely get less than eight pages out of hand, though hardly able to come downstairs for twittering knees.

I shall put in ——'s letter. He says so little of his circumstances that I am in an impossibility to give him advice more specific than a copy-book. Give him my love, however, and tell him it is the mark of the parochial gentleman who has never travelled to find all wrong in a foreign land. Let him hold on, and he will find one country as good as another ; and in the meanwhile let him resist the fatal British tendency to communicate his dissatisfaction with a country to its inhabitants. 'Tis a good idea, but it somehow fails to please. In a fortnight, if I can keep my spirit in the box at all, I should be nearly through this Arabian desert ; so can tackle something fresh.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. H. LOW

It was some twenty months since the plan of publishing the *Child's Garden* in the first instance as a picture-book had been mooted (see vol. xxxii. (vol. ii. of *Letters*), p. 229 foll.). But it had never taken effect, and in the following March the volume

appeared without illustrations in England, and also, I believe, in America.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, Hants, England, First week in November, I guess, 1884

MY DEAR LOW,—Now look here, the above is my address for three months, I hope; continue, on your part, if you please, to write to Edinburgh, which is safe, but if Mrs. Low thinks of coming to England, she might take a run down from London (four hours from Waterloo, main line) and stay a day or two with us among the pines. If not, I hope it will be only a pleasure deferred till you can join her.

My Children's Verses will be published here in a volume called *A Child's Garden*. The sheets are in hand; I will see if I cannot send you the lot, so that you might have a bit of a start. In that case I would do nothing to publish in the States, and you might try an illustrated edition there; which, if the book went fairly over here, might, when ready, be imported. But of this more fully ere long. You will see some verses of mine in the last *Magazine of Art*, with pictures by a young lady; rather pretty, I think. If we find a market for *Phasellulus loquitur*, we can try another. I hope it isn't necessary to put the verse into that rustic printing. I am philistine enough to prefer clean printer's type; indeed, I can form no idea of the verses thus transcribed by the incult and tottering hand of the draughtsman, nor gather any impression beyond one of weariness to the eyes. Yet the other day, in the *Century*, I saw it imputed as a crime to Vedder that he had not thus travestied Omar Khayyàm. We live in a rum age of music without airs, stories without incident, pictures without beauty, American wood engravings that should have been etchings, and dry-point etchings that ought to have been mezzotints. I think of giving 'em literature without words; and I believe if you were to try invisible illustration, it would enjoy a considerable vogue. So long as an artist is on his head, is painting with a flute, or writes with an etcher's needle, or conducts the orchestra with a

meat-axe, all is well; and plaudits shower along with roses. But any plain man who tries to follow the obtrusive canons of his art, is but a commonplace figure. To hell with him is the motto, or at least not that; for he will have his reward, but he will never be thought a person of parts.

January 3, 1885.—And here has this been lying near two months. I have failed to get together a preliminary copy of the *Child's Verses* for you, in spite of doughty efforts; but yesterday I sent you the first sheet of the definitive edition, and shall continue to send the others as they come. If you can, and care to, work them—why so, well. If not, I send you fodder. But the time presses; for though I will delay a little over the proofs, and though it is even possible they may delay the English issue until Easter, it will certainly not be later. Therefore perpend, and do not get caught out. Of course, if you can do pictures, it will be a great pleasure to me to see our names joined; and more than that, a great advantage, as I daresay you may be able to make a bargain for some share a little less spectral than the common for the poor author. But this is all as you shall choose; I give you *carte blanche* to do or not to do.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

O, Sargent has been and painted my portrait; a very nice fellow he is, and is supposed to have done well; it is a poetical but very chicken-boned figurehead, as thus represented. R. L. S. Go on.

P.P.S.—Your picture came; and let me thank you for it very much. I am so hunted I had near forgotten. I find it very graceful; and I mean to have it framed.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

About this time Mr. Stevenson was in some hesitation as to letting himself be proposed for the office of President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, November, 1884

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have no hesitation in recommending you to let your name go up; please yourself about an

address; though I think, if we could meet, we could arrange something suitable. What you propose would be well enough in a way, but so modest as to suggest a whine. From that point of view it would be better to change a little; but this, whether we meet or not, we must discuss. Tait, Chrystal, the Royal Society, and I, all think you amply deserve this honour and far more; it is not the True Blue to call this serious compliment a "trial"; you should be glad of this recognition. As for resigning, that is easy enough if found necessary; but to refuse would be husky and unsatisfactory. *Sic subs.*

R. L. S.

My cold is still very heavy; but I carry it well. Fanny is very very much out of sorts, principally through perpetual misery with me. I fear I have been a little in the dumps, which, *as you know, sir*, is a very great sin. I must try to be more cheerful; but my cough is so severe that I have sometimes most exhausting nights and very peevish wakenings. However, this shall be remedied, and last night I was distinctly better than the night before. There is, my dear Mr. Stevenson (so I moralise blandly as we sit together on the devil's garden-wall) no more abominable sin than this gloom, this plaguy peevishness; why (say I) what matters it if we be a little uncomfortable—that is no reason for mangling our unhappy wives. And then I turn and *girn* on the unfortunate Cassandra.—Your fellow culprit,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

Mr. Stevenson, the elder, had read the play of *Admiral Guinea*, written in September by his son and Mr. Henley in collaboration, and had protested, with his usual vehemence of feeling and expression, against the stage confrontation of profane blackguardry in the person of Pew with evangelical piety in that of the reformed slaving captain who gives his name to the piece.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth
(*The Three B's*) [*November* 5, 1884]

My dear Father,—Allow me to say, in a strictly Pickwickian sense, that you are a silly fellow. I am pained

indeed, but how should I be offended? I think you exaggerate; I cannot forget that you had the same impression of the *Deacon;* and yet, when you saw it played, were less revolted than you looked for; and I will still hope that the *Admiral* also is not so bad as you suppose. There is one point, however, where I differ from you very frankly. Religion is in the world; I do not think you are the man to deny the importance of its rôle; and I have long decided not to leave it on one side in art. The opposition of the Admiral and Mr. Pew is not, to my eyes, either horrible or irreverent; but it may be, and it probably is, very ill done: what then? This is a failure; better luck next time; more power to the elbow, more discretion, more wisdom in the design, and the old defeat becomes the scene of the new victory. Concern yourself about no failure; they do not cost lives, as in engineering; they are the *pierres perdues* of successes. Fame is (truly) a vapour; do not think of it; if the writer means well and tries hard, no failure will injure him, whether with God or man.

I wish I could hear a brighter account of yourself; but I am inclined to acquit the *Admiral* of having a share in the responsibility. My very heavy cold is, I hope, drawing off; and the change to this charming house in the forest will, I hope, complete my re-establishment.—With love to all, believe me, your ever affectionate

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth,
November 11, 1884

DEAR BOY,—I have been nearly smashed altogether; fever and chills, with really very considerable suffering; and to my deep gloom and some fear about the future, work has had to stop. There was no way out of it; yesterday and to-day nothing would come, it was a mere waste of tissue, productive of spoiled paper.

I hope it will not last long; for the bum-baily is panting

at my rump, and when I turn a scared eye across my shoulder, I behold his talons quivering above my frock-coat tails.

Gosse has writ to offer me £40 for a Christmas number ghost story for the *Pall Mall:* eight thousand words. I have, with some conditions, accepted; I pray Heaven I may be able to do it. But I am not sure that my incapacity to work is wholly due to illness; I believe the morphine I have been taking for my bray may have a hand in it. It moderates the bray, but I think, sews up the donkey.

I think my wife is a little better. If only I could get in trim, and get this work done, I should be quite chipper.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

This letter and the one on page 18, on the same subject, are written in the styles and characters of the two Edinburgh ex-elders, Thomson and Johnstone (or Johnson) alternately.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park,
Bournemouth, November 11 [1884]

My dear Charles,—I am in my new house, thus proudly styled, as you perceive; but the deevil a tower ava' can be perceived (except out of window); this is not as it should be; one might have hoped, at least, a turret. We are all vilely unwell. I put in the dark watches imitating a donkey with some success, but little pleasure; and in the afternoon I indulge in a smart fever, accompanied by aches and shivers. There is thus little monotony to be deplored. I at least am a *regular* invalid; I would scorn to bray in the afternoon; I would indignantly refuse the proposal to fever in the night. What is bred in the bone will come out, sir, in the flesh; and the same spirit that prompted me to date my letter regulates the hour and character of my attacks.—I am, sir, yours,

Thomson.

To Miss Ferrier

The controversy here mentioned had been one in which Mr. Samuel Smiles and others had taken part, concerning the rival claims of Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of R. L. S., and John Rennie to have been the chief engineers of the Bell Rock Lighthouse (see *A Family of Engineers*, chap. iii).

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 12, 1884

My dear Coggie,—Many thanks for the two photos which now decorate my room. I am particularly glad to have the Bell Rock. I wonder if you saw me plunge, lance in rest, into a controversy thereanent? It was a very one-sided affair. The man I attacked cried "Boo-hoo!" and referred me to his big brother. And the big brother refused to move. So I slept upon the field of battle, paraded, sang Te Deum, and came home after a review rather than a campaign.

Please tell Campbell I got his letter. The Wild Woman of the West has been much amiss and complaining sorely. I hope nothing more serious is wrong with her than just my ill-health, and consequent anxiety and labour; but the deuce of it is, that the cause continues. I am about knocked out of time now: a miserable, snuffling, shivering, fever-stricken, nightmare-ridden, knee-jottering, hoast-hoast-hoasting shadow and remains of man. But we'll no gie ower just yet a bittie. We've seen waur; and dod, mem, it's my belief that we'll see better. I dinna ken 'at I've muckle mair to say to ye, or, indeed, onything; but just here's guid-fallowship, guid health, and the wale o' guid fortune to your bonny sel'; and my respecs to the Perfessor and his wife, and the Prinshiple, an' the Bell Rock, an' ony ither public chara'ters that I'm acquaunt wi'.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Bournemouth, November* 13, 1884]

My dear Thomson,—It's a maist remarkable fac', but nae shüner had I written yon braggin', blawin' letter aboot

ma business habits, when bang! that very day, ma hoast * begude in the aifternune. It is really remaurkable; it's providenshle, I believe. The ink wasnae fair dry, the words were nae weel ooten ma mouth, when bang, I got the lee The mair ye think o't, Thomson, the less ye'll like the looks o't. Proavidence (I'm no' sayin') is all verra weel *in its place;* but if Proavidence has nae mainners, wha's to learn't? Proavidence is a fine thing, but hoo would you like Proavidence to keep your till for ye? The richt place for Proavidence is in the kirk; it has naething to do wi' private correspondence between twa gentlemen, nor freendly cracks, nor a wee bit word of sculduddery † ahint the door, nor, in shoart, wi' ony *hole-and-corner wark*, what I would call. I'm pairfec'ly willin' to meet in wi' Proavidence, I'll be proud to meet in wi' him, when my time's come and I cannae dae nae better; but if he's to come skinking aboot my stair-fit, damned, I micht as weel be deid for a' the comfort I'll can get in life. Cannae he no' be made to understand that it's beneath him? Gosh, if I was in his business, I would nae steir my heid for a plain, auld ex-elder that, tak him the way he taks himsel', 's just aboot as honest as he can weel afford, an' but for a wheen auld scandals, near forgotten noo, is a pairfec'ly respectable and thoroughly decent man. Or if I fashed wi' him ava', it wad be kind o' handsome like; a pun'-note under his stair door, or a bottle o' auld, blended malt to his bit marnin', as a teshtymonial like yon ye ken sae weel aboot, but mair successfu'.

Dear Thomson, have I ony money? If I have, *send it*, for the loard's sake.

JOHNSTONE.

To W. E. HENLEY

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 13, 1884

MY DEAR BOY,—A thousand thanks for the *Molière*. I have already read, in this noble presentment, *La Comtesse*

* Cough. † Improper talk.

d'Escarbagnas, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, and a part of *Les Femmes Savantes ;* I say, Poquelin took damned good care of himself : Argan and Arysule, what parts ! Many thanks also for John Silver's pistol ; I recognise it ; that was the one he gave Jim Hawkins at the mouth of the pit ; I shall get a plate put upon it to that effect.

My birthday was a great success ; I was better in health ; I got delightful presents ; I received the definite commission from the P.M.G., and began to write the tale ; and in the evening Bob arrived, a simple seraph. We have known each other ten years ; and here we are, too, like the pair that met in the infirmary : why can we not mellow into kindness and sweetness like Bob ? What is the reason ? Does nature, even in my octogenarian carcase, run too strong that I must be still a bawler and a brawler and a treader upon corns ? You, at least, have achieved the miracle of embellishing your personal appearance to that point that, unless your mother is a woman of even more perspicacity than I suppose, it is morally impossible that she can recognise you. When I saw you ten years ago, you looked rough and—kind of stigmatised, a look of an embittered political shoemaker ; where is it now ? You now come waltzing around like some light-hearted monarch ; essentially jovial, essentially royal ; radiant of smiles. And in the meanwhile, by a complementary process, I turn into a kind of hunchback with white hair ! The devil.

Well, let us be thankful for our mercies : in these ten years what a change from the cell in the hospital, and the two sick boys in the next bed, to the influence, the recognition, the liberty, and the happiness of to-day ! Well, well ; fortune is not so blind as people say ; you dreed a good long weird ; but you have got into a fine green paddock now to kick your heels in. And I, too, what a difference ; what a difference in my work, in my situation, and unfortunately, also in my health ! But one need not complain of a pebble in the shoe, when by mere justice one should rot in a dungeon.

Many thanks to both of you ; long life to our friendship, and that means, I do most firmly believe, to these clay

continents on which we fly our colours; good luck to one and all, and may God continue to be merciful.—Your old and warm friend,

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Stevenson had been unable to finish for the *Pall Mall* Christmas number the tale he had first intended; had tried the publishers with *Markheim* (afterwards printed in the collection called *The Merry Men*), which proved too short; had then furbished up as well as he could a tale drafted in the Pitlochry days, *The Body-Snatcher*, which was advertised in the streets of London by sandwich-men carrying posters so horrific that they were suppressed, if I remember aright, by the police. Stevenson justly thought the tale not up to his best mark, and would not take the full payment which had been bargained for. His correspondent was just about to start on a tour to the United States. Mr. Charles Morley was at this time manager or assistant-manager of the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Nov. 15, 1884

My dear Gosse,—This Mr. Morley of yours is a most desperate fellow. He has sent me (for my opinion) the most truculent advertisement I ever saw, in which the white hairs of Gladstone are dragged round Troy behind my chariot wheels. What can I say? I say nothing to him; and to you, I content myself with remarking that he seems a desperate fellow.

All luck to you on your American adventure; may you find health, wealth, and entertainment! If you see, as you likely will, Frank R. Stockton, pray greet him from me in words to this effect:—

> My Stockton if I failed to like,
> It were a sheer depravity,
> For I went down with the *Thomas Hyke*
> And up with the *Negative Gravity!*

I adore these tales.

I hear flourishing accounts of your success at Cambridge, so you leave with a good omen. Remember me to *green*

corn if it is in season ; if not you had better hang yourself on a sour apple tree, for your voyage has been lost.—Yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO AUSTIN DOBSON

Written in acknowledgment of the gift of a desk.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December*, 1884 ?]

DEAR DOBSON,—Set down my delay to your own fault ; I wished to acknowledge such a gift from you in some of my inapt and slovenly rhymes but you should have sent me your pen and not your desk. The verses stand up to the axles in a miry cross-road, whence the coursers of the sun shall never draw them ; hence I am constrained to this uncourtliness, that I must appear before one of the kings of that country of rhyme without my singing robes. For less than this, if we may trust the book of Esther, favourites have tasted death ; but I conceive the kingdom of the Muses mildlier mannered ; and in particular that country which you administer and which I seem to see as a half-suburban land ; a land of hollyhocks and country houses ; a land where at night, in thorny and sequestered bypaths, you will meet masqueraders going to a ball in their sedans, and the rector steering homeward by the light of his lantern ; a land of the windmill, and the west wind, and the flowering hawthorn with a little scented letter in the hollow of its trunk, and the kites flying over all in the season of kites, and the far away blue spires of a cathedral city.

Will you forgive me, then, for my delay and accept my thanks not only for your present, but for the letter which followed it, and which perhaps I more particularly value, and believe me to be, with much admiration, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. Henley

Stevenson and his wife were still busy on *More New Arabian Nights* (the romance of the *Great North Road* having been begun and postponed). The question here touched is, to what publishers should they be offered.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December, 1884

Dear Lad,—For Cassell, I thought the G.N.R. (not railway this time) was the motto. What are Cassells to do with this eccentric mass of blague and seriousness? Their poor auld pows will a' turn white as snaw, man. They would skriegh with horror. You see, the lot of tales is now coming to a kind of bearing. They are being quite rehandled; all the three intercalary narratives have been condemned and are being replaced—two by picturesque and highly romantic adventures; one by a comic tale of character; and the thing as it goes together so far, is, I do think, singularly varied and vivid, coming near to laughter and touching tears.

Will Cassell stand it? No.

Et de deux.

I vote for the syndicate, and to give Cassell the *North Road* when done. *Et sic subscr.*

R. L. S.

My health is better. I never sleep, to be sure; Cawdor hath butchered sleep; and I am twinged a bit by aches and rheumatism; but I get my five to seven hours of work; and if that is not health, it is the nearest I am like to have.

To Henry James

The following to Henry James refers to the essay of R. L. S. called *A Humble Remonstrance,* which had just appeared in *Longman's Magazine.* Mr. James had written holding out the prospect of a continuance of the friendly controversy which had thus been opened up between them on the aims and qualities of fiction.

Bonallie Towers, Branksome Park, Bournemouth, December 8, 1884

My dear Henry James,—This is a very brave hearing from more points than one. The first point is that there

is a hope of a sequel. For this I laboured. Seriously, from the dearth of information and thoughtful interest in the art of literature, those who try to practise it with any deliberate purpose run the risk of finding no fit audience. People suppose it is " the stuff " that interests them ; they think, for instance, that the prodigious fine thoughts and sentiments in Shakespeare impress by their own weight, not understanding that the unpolished diamond is but a stone. They think that striking situations, or good dialogue, are got by studying life ; they will not rise to understand that they are prepared by deliberate artifice and set off by painful suppressions. Now, I want the whole thing well ventilated, for my own education and the public's, and I beg you to look as quick as you can, to follow me up with every circumstance of defeat where we differ, and (to prevent the flouting of the laity) to emphasise the points where we agree. I trust your paper will show me the way to a rejoinder ; and that rejoinder I shall hope to make with so much art as to woo or drive you from your threatened silence. I would not ask better than to pass my life in beating out this quarter of corn with such a seconder as yourself.

Point the second—I am rejoiced indeed to hear you speak so kindly of my work ; rejoiced and surprised. I seem to myself a very rude, left-handed countryman ; not fit to be read, far less complimented, by a man so accomplished, so adroit, so craftsmanlike as you. You will happily never have cause to understand the despair with which a writer like myself considers (say) the part scene in *Lady Barberina*. Every touch surprises me by its intangible precision ; and the effect when done, as light as syllabub, as distinct as a picture, fills me with envy. Each man among us prefers his own aim, and I prefer mine ; but when we come to speak of performance, I recognise myself, compared with you, to be a lout and slouch of the first water.

Where we differ, both as to the design of stories and the delineation of character, I begin to lament. Of course, I am not so dull as to ask you to desert your walk ; but could you not, in one novel, to oblige a sincere admirer, and to

enrich his shelves with a beloved volume, could you not, and might you not, cast your characters in a mould a little more abstract and academic (dear Mrs. Pennyman had already, among your other work, a taste of what I mean), and pitch the incidents, I do not say in any stronger, but in a slightly more emphatic key—as it were an episode from one of the old (so-called) novels of adventure? I fear you will not; and I suppose I must sighingly admit you to be right. And yet, when I see, as it were, a book of Tom Jones handled with your exquisite precision and shot through with those sidelights of reflection in which you excel, I relinquish the dear vision with regret. Think upon it.

As you know, I belong to that besotted class of man, the invalid: this puts me to a stand in the way of visits. But it is possible that some day you may feel that a day near the sea and among pinewoods would be a pleasant change from town. If so, please let us know; and my wife and I will be delighted to put you up, and give you what we can to eat and drink (I have a fair bottle of claret).—On the back of which, believe me, yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I reopen this to say that I have re-read my paper, and cannot think I have at all succeeded in being either veracious or polite. I knew, of course, that I took your paper merely as a pin to hang my own remarks upon; but, alas! what a thing is any paper! What fine remarks can you not hang on mine! How I have sinned against proportion, and with every effort to the contrary, against the merest rudiments of courtesy to you! You are indeed a very acute reader to have divined the real attitude of my mind; and I can only conclude, not without closed eyes and shrinking shoulders, in the well-worn words,

Lay on, Macduff!

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, December 9, 1884

My dear People,—The dreadful tragedy of the *Pall Mall* has come to a happy but ludicrous ending: I am to keep the money, the tale writ for them is to be buried certain fathoms deep, and they are to flash out before the world with our old friend of Kinnaird, *The Body-Snatcher*. When you come, please to bring—

(1) My Montaigne, or, at least, the two last volumes.
(2) My Milton in the three vols. in green.
(3) The Shakespeare that Babington sent me for a wedding-gift.
(4) Hazlitt's *Table Talk and Plain Speaker*.

If you care to get a box of books from Douglas and Foulis, let them be *solid*. *Croker Papers*, *Correspondence of Napoleon*, *History of Henry IV.*, Lang's *Folk Lore*, would be my desires.

I had a charming letter from Henry James about my *Longman* paper. I did not understand queries about the verses; the pictures to the Seagull I thought charming; those to the second have left me with a pain in my poor belly and a swimming in the head.

About money, I am afloat and no more, and I warn you, unless I have great luck, I shall have to fall upon you at the New Year like a hundredweight of bricks. Doctor, rent, chemist, are all threatening; sickness has bitterly delayed my work; and unless, as I say, I have the mischief's luck, I shall completely break down. *Verbum sapientibus*. I do not live cheaply, and I question if I ever shall; but if only I had a half-penny worth of health, I could now easily suffice. The last breakdown of my head is what makes this bankruptcy probable.

Fanny is still out of sorts; Bogue better; self fair, but a stranger to the blessings of sleep.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

December 15, 1884

My dear Mother,—Perhaps the *Milton* is at Hyères; I did not think so, but it might be. It is Lang's *Myths* that I want. The *Henry Fourth*—let 'em look in the reviews: I can't remember the name, Wiley or something; but it has been reviewed in the *Athenæum*, Saturday, and *Academy* of the past three weeks or month.

Sargent just gone; a charming, simple, clever, honest young man; he has delighted us. It appears Gladstone talks all the time about *Treasure Island;* he would do better to attend to the imperial affairs of England. We shall tell you nothing of what we think of S.'s picture, for the excellent reason that we prefer to hear from you. It is a lovely frosty morning.

Why I have never spoken of my father's appearances * I cannot think. I was working so very hard that I had little time to remember anything. I thought both good; but the reference to Grant admirable. I would have changed nothing.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*December*, 1884]

Dear Lad,—I have made up my mind about the P.M.G., and send you a copy, which please keep or return. As for not giving a reduction, what are we? Are we artists or city men? Why do we sneer at stockbrokers? O nary; I will not take the £40. I took that as a fair price for my best work; I was not able to produce my best; and I will be damned if I steal with my eyes open. *Sufficit.* This is my look-out. As for the paper being rich, certainly it is;

* As President of the Royal Society.

but I am honourable. It is no more above me in money than the poor slaveys and cads from whom I look for honesty are below me. Am I Pepys, that because I can find the countenance of "some of our ablest merchants," that because——and——pour forth languid twaddle and get paid for it, I, too, should "cheerfully continue to steal"? I am not Pepys. I do not live much to God and honour; but I will not wilfully turn my back on both. I am, like all the rest of us, falling ever lower from the bright ideas I began with, falling into greed, into idleness, into middle-aged and slippered fireside cowardice; but is it you, my bold blade, that I hear crying this sordid and rank twaddle in my ear? Preaching the dankest Grundyism and upholding the rank customs of our trade—you who are so cruel hard upon the customs of the publishers? O man, look at the Beam in our own Eyes; and whatever else you do, do not plead Satan's cause, or plead it for all; either embrace the bad, or respect the good when you see a poor devil trying for it. If this is the honesty of authors—to take what you can get and console yourself because publishers are rich—take my name from the rolls of that association. 'Tis a caucus of weaker thieves, jealous of the stronger.—Ever yours,

THE ROARING R. L. S.

You will see from the enclosed that I have stuck to what I think my dues pretty tightly in spite of this flourish: these are my words for a poor ten-pound note!

TO MISS FERRIER

This refers to the death of Sir Alexander Grant, the distinguished Aristotelian scholar and Principal of Edinburgh University, married to Susan, second daughter of Professor J. F. Ferrier of St. Andrews.

[*Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec.*, 1884]

MY DEAR COGGIE,—We are very much distressed to hear of this which has befallen your family. As for Sir Alexander, I can but speak from my own feelings: he survived to finish his book and to conduct, with such a great success,

the tercentenary. Ah, how many die just upon the threshold! Had he died a year ago, how great a disappointment! But all this is nothing to the survivors. Do please, as soon as you are able, let us know how it goes and *how it is likely to go* with the family; and believe that both my wife and I are most anxious to have good news, or the best possible. My poor Coggie, I know very well how you must feel; you are passing a bad time.

Our news must seem very impertinent. We have both been ill; I, pretty bad, my wife, pretty well down; but I, at least, am better. The Bogue, who is let out every night for half an hour's yapping, is anchored in the moonlight just before the door, and, under the belief that he is watch-dog at a lone farm beleaguered by moss-troopers, is simply raising Cain.

I can add nothing more, but just that we wish to hear as soon as you have nothing else to do—not to hurry, of course,—if it takes three months, no matter—but bear us in mind.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth [*Winter*, 1884]

My dear Lad,—Here was I in bed; not writing, not hearing, and finding myself gently and agreeably ill used; and behold I learn you are bad yourself. Get your wife to send us a word how you are. I am better decidedly. Bogue got his Christmas card, and behaved well for three days after. It may interest the cynical to learn that I started my last hemorrhage by too sedulous attentions to my dear Bogue. The stick was broken; and that night Bogue, who was attracted by the extraordinary aching of his bones, and is always inclined to a serious view of his own ailments, announced with his customary pomp that he was dying. In this case, however, it was not the dog that died. (He had tried to bite his mother's ankles.) I have written a long and peculiarly solemn paper on the

technical elements of style. It is pathbreaking and epoch-making; but I do not think the public will be readily convoked to its perusal. Did I tell you that S. C. had risen to the paper on James? At last! O but I was pleased; he's (like Johnnie) been lang, lang o' comin', but here he is. He will not object to my future manœuvres in the same field, as he has to my former. All the family are here; my father better than I have seen him these two years; my mother the same as ever. I do trust you are better, and I am yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Henry Arthur Jones

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Dec. 30, 1884

Dear Sir,—I am so accustomed to hear nonsense spoken about all the arts, and the drama in particular, that I cannot refrain from saying "Thank you" for your paper. In my answer to Mr. James, in the December *Longman*, you may see that I have merely touched, I think in a parenthesis, on the drama; but I believe enough was said to indicate our agreement in essentials.

Wishing you power and health to further enunciate and to act upon these principles, believe me, dear sir, yours truly,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Sidney Colvin

Stevenson had begun with great eagerness to prepare material for a volume on the Duke of Wellington for the series of *English Worthies* published by Messrs. Longman and edited by Andrew Lang, but beyond preparation the scheme never went.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, Jan. 4, 1885

Dear S. C.,—I am on my feet again, and getting on my boots to do the Iron Duke. Conceive my glee: I have

refused the £100, and am to get some sort of royalty, not yet decided, instead. 'Tis for Longman's *English Worthies*, edited by A. Lang. Aw haw, haw!

Now, look here, could you get me a loan of the Despatches, or is that a dream? I should have to mark passages I fear, and certainly note pages on the fly. If you think it a dream, will Bain get me a second-hand copy, or who would? The sooner and cheaper I can get it the better. If there is anything in your weird library that bears on either the man or the period, put it in a mortar and fire it here instanter; I shall catch. I shall want, of course, an infinity of books: among which, any lives there may be; a life of the Marquis Marmont (the Maréchal), *Marmont's Memoirs*, *Greville's Memoirs*, *Peel's Memoirs*, *Napier*, that blind man's history of England you once lent me, Hamley's *Waterloo;* can you get me any of these? Thiers, idle Thiers also. Can you help a man getting into his boots for such a huge campaign? How are you? A Good New Year to you. I mean to have a good one, but on whose funds I cannot fancy: not mine leastways, as I am a mere derelict and drift beam-on to bankruptcy.

For God's sake, remember the man who set out for to conquer Arthur Wellesley, with a broken bellows and an empty pocket.—Yours ever,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO MR. NILES

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Hants, Jan. [6*th* 1885?]

DEAR MR. NILES,—I wrote to you on the occasion of the *Silverado Squatters* as near as possible to the following effect: that as it had pleased God to endow me with a sense of humour, I should never enter with you into the discussion of any points of business. I asked for no explanation, nor can I at all remember that any was offered. I cannot conceive that any explanation would affect the difference I regret to continue to observe in our views of these affairs.

From that date, I determined to offer you my books only

where it was convenient, and only on receipt of a proper sum for the advanced sheets. This plan is simple, very plain, not I think unjust to you and noticeably more profitable to myself than the one on which you seemed prepared to act.

I can remember entering into no engagement with you except one: that one I kept; you had, as I engaged, the *Silverado Squatters* for nothing, and I fail totally to see what engagement remains, or what "relationship" there is to be dissolved. I am not aware of any particular "disaffection"; I simply, as a man trying to live by his pen, prefer dealings in which I gain, to dealings in which I positively lose. I have exercised, and I beg you to believe that I will continue to exercise, my undoubted right to dispose of my own works to my own best advantage. I deplore the fact that you have lost by me; but I wish to point out to you in conclusion that that loss was neither caused nor accompanied by any gain to me. It was caused, I must suppose, by the difficulties of my literature, which I lament, and which I shall continue to do my best to remedy.

Am I to understand from the concluding paragraph of your letter that you wish to withdraw your offer for the sheets of *Otto?* I am not suggesting this; I shall carry out that bargain, on my side, with pleasure; but as your language is capable of being so understood I think it only fair that you should make your meaning explicit.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

Stevenson had been asked by his father to look over the proofs of a paper which the latter was about to read, as President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, "On the Principal Causes of Silting in Estuaries," in connection with the Manchester Ship Canal Scheme.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, 15th January, 1885

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am glad you like the changes. I own I was pleased with my hand's darg; you may observe,

I have corrected several errors which (you may tell Mr. Dick) he had allowed to pass his eagle eye ; I wish there may be none in mine ; at least, the order is better The second title, " Some new Engineering Questions involved in the M.S.C. Scheme of last Session of P.," likes me the best. I think it a very good paper ; and I am vain enough to think I have materially helped to polish the diamond. I ended by feeling quite proud of the paper, as if it had been mine ; the next time you have as good a one, I will overhaul it for the wages of feeling as clever as I did when I had managed to understand and helped to set it clear. I wonder if I anywhere misapprehended you ? I rather think not at the last ; at the first shot I know I missed a point or two. Some of what may appear to you to be wanton changes, a little study will show to be necessary.

Yes, Carlyle was ashamed of himself as few men have been ; and let all carpers look at what he did. He prepared all these papers for publication with his own hand ; all his wife's complaints, all the evidence of his own misconduct : who else would have done so much ? Is repentance, which God accepts, to have no avail with men ? nor even with the dead ? I have heard too much against the thrawn, discomfortable dog : dead he is, and we may be glad of it ; but he was a better man than most of us, no less patently than he was a worse. To fill the world with whining is against all my views : I do not like impiety. But—but—there are two sides to all things, and the old scalded baby had his noble side.—Ever affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Perhaps not all readers of younger generations may be aware that in these days " the Grand Old Man " was the current slang appellation of Mr. Gladstone, habitually shortened into " the G.O.M."

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, January, 1885

Dear S. C.,—I have addressed a letter to the G.O.M. *à propos* of Wellington ; and I became aware, you will be interested to hear, of an overwhelming respect for the old

gentleman. I can *blaguer* his failures; but when you actually address him, and bring the two statures and records to confrontation, dismay is the result. By mere continuance of years, he must impose; the man who helped to rule England before I was conceived, strikes me with a new sense of greatness and antiquity, when I must actually beard him with the cold forms of correspondence. I shied at the necessity of calling him plain "Sir"! Had he been "My lord," I had been happier; no, I am no equalitarian. Honour to whom honour is due; and if to none, why, then, honour to the old!

These, O Slade Professor, are my unvarnished sentiments: I was a little surprised to find them so extreme, and therefore I communicate the fact.

Belabour thy brains, as to whom it would be well to question. I have a small space; I wish to make a popular book, nowhere obscure, nowhere, if it can be helped, unhuman. It seems to me the most hopeful plan to tell the tale, so far as may be, by anecdote. He did not die till so recently, there must be hundreds who remember him, and thousands who have still ungarnered stories. Dear man, to the breach! Up, soldier of the iron dook, up, Slades, and at 'em! (which, conclusively, he did not say: the at-'em-ic theory is to be dismissed). You know piles of fellows who must reek with matter; help! help! I am going to try Happy-and-Glorious-long-to-reign-over-us. H. M. must remember things: and it is my belief, if my letter could be discreetly introduced, she would like to tell them. So I jest, when I don't address my mind to it: when I do, shall I be smit louting to my knee, as before the G.O.M.? *Problème!*—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

In the two following letters are expressed some of the distress and bitterness with which, in common with most Englishmen, Stevenson felt the circumstances of Gordon's abandonment in the Soudan and the failure of the belated attempt to rescue him. The advice to go on with "my book" refers, if I remember right, to

some scheme for the republication in book form of stray magazine papers of mine of a more or less personal or biographical nature.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February, 1885

MY DEAR COLVIN,—You are indeed a backward correspondent, and much may be said against you. But in this weather, and O dear ! in this political scene of degradation, much must be forgiven. I fear England is dead of Burgessry and only walks about galvanised. I do not love to think of my countrymen these days : nor to remember myself. Why was I silent ? I feel I have no right to blame any one ; but I won't write to the G.O.M. I do really not see my way to any form of signature, unless " your fellow criminal in the eyes of God," which might disquiet the proprieties.

About your book, I have always said : go on. The drawing of character is a different thing from publishing the details of a private career. No one objects to the first, or should object, if his name be not put upon it ; at the other, I draw the line. In a preface, if you chose, you might distinguish ; it is, besides, a thing for which you are eminently well equipped, and which you would do with taste and incision. I long to see the book. People like themselves (to explain a little more) ; no one likes his life, which is a misbegotten issue, and a tale of failure. To see these failures either touched upon, or *coasted*, to get the idea of a spying eye and blabbing tongue about the house, is to lose all privacy in life. To see that thing, which we do love, our character, set forth, is ever gratifying. See how my *Talk and Talkers* went ; everyone liked his own portrait, and shrieked about other people's ; so it will be with yours. If you are the least true to the essential, the sitter will be pleased ; very likely not his friends, and that from *various motives*.

R. L. S.

When will your holiday be ? I sent your letter to my wife, and forget. Keep us in mind, and I hope we shall be able to receive you.

To John Addington Symonds

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, February, 1885

My dear Symonds,—Yes, we have both been very neglectful. I had horrid luck, catching two thundering influenzas in August and November. I recovered from the last with difficulty, but have come through this blustering winter with some general success ; in the house, up and down. My wife, however, has been painfully upset by my health. Last year, of course, was cruelly trying to her nerves ; Nice and Hyères are bad experiences ; and though she is not ill, the doctor tells me that prolonged anxiety may do her a real mischief.

I feel a little old and fagged, and chary of speech, and not very sure of spirit in my work ; but considering what a year I have passed, and how I have twice sat on Charon's pierhead, I am surprising.

My father has presented us with a very pretty home in this place, into which we hope to move by May. My *Child's Verses* come out next week. *Otto* begins to appear in April ; *More New Arabian Nights* as soon as possible. Moreover, I am neck deep in *Wellington ;* also a story on the stocks, *The Great North Road.* O I am busy ! Lloyd is at college in Edinburgh. That is, I think, all that can be said by way of news.

Have you read *Huckleberry Finn?* It contains many excellent things ; above all, the whole story of a healthy boy's dealings with his conscience, incredibly well done.

My own conscience is badly seared ; a want of piety ; yet I pray for it, tacitly, every day ; believing it, after courage, the only gift worth having ; and its want, in a man of any claims to honour, quite unpardonable. The tone of your letter seemed to me very sound. In these dark days of public dishonour, I do not know that one can do better than carry our private trials piously. What a picture is this of a nation ! No man that I can see, on any side or party, seems to have the least sense of our ineffable shame : the desertion of the garrisons. I tell my little parable

that Germany took England, and then there was an Indian Mutiny, and Bismarck said: "Quite right; let Delhi and Calcutta and Bombay fall; and let the women and children be treated Sepoy fashion," and people say "O, but that is very different!" And then I wish I were dead. Millais (I hear) was painting Gladstone when the news came of Gordon's death; Millais was much affected, and Gladstone said, "Why? *It is the man's own temerity!*" Voilà le Bourgeois! le voilà nu! but why should I blame Gladstone, when I too am a Bourgeois? when I have held my peace? Why did I hold my peace? Because I am a sceptic: *i.e.*, a Bourgeois. We believe in nothing, Symonds: you don't, and I don't; and these are two reasons, out of a handful of millions, why England stands before the world dripping with blood and daubed with dishonour. I will first try to take the beam out of my own eye, trusting that even private effort somehow betters and braces the general atmosphere. See, for example, if England has shown (I put it hypothetically) one spark of manly sensibility, they have been shamed into it by the spectacle of Gordon. Police-Officer Cole is the only man that I see to admire. I dedicate my *New Arabs* to him and Cox, in default of other great public characters.—Yours ever most affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO EDMUND GOSSE

The following refers to an edition of Gray, with notes and a short prefatory Life by Mr. Gosse; and to the publication of the *Child's Garden of Verses*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, March 12, 1885

MY DEAR GOSSE,—I was indeed much exercised how I could be worked into Gray; and lo! when I saw it, the passage seemed to have been written with a single eye to elucidate the—worst?—well, not a very good poem of Gray's. Your little life is excellent, clean, neat, efficient. I have read many of your notes, too, with pleasure. Your

connection with Gray was a happy circumstance; it was a suitable conjunction.

I did not answer your letter from the States, for what was I to say? I liked getting it and reading it; I was rather flattered that you wrote it to me; and then I'll tell you what I did—I put it in the fire. Why? Well, just because it was very natural and expansive; and thinks I to myself, if I die one of these fine nights, this is just the letter that Gosse would not wish to go into the hands of third parties. Was I well inspired? And I did not answer it because you were in your high places, sailing with supreme dominion, and seeing life in a particular glory; and I was peddling in a corner, confined to the house, overwhelmed with necessary work, which I was not always doing well, and, in the very mild form in which the disease approaches me, touched with a sort of bustling cynicism. Why throw cold water? How ape your agreeable frame of mind? In short, I held my tongue.

I have now published on 101 small pages *The Complete Proof of Mr. R. L. Stevenson's Incapacity to Write Verse*, in a series of graduated examples with table of contents. I think I shall issue a companion volume of exercises: "Analyse this poem. Collect and communicate the ugly words. Distinguish and condemn the *chevilles*. State Mr. Stevenson's faults of taste in regard to the measure. What reasons can you gather from this example for your belief that Mr. S. is unable to write any other measure?"

They look ghastly in the cold light of print; but there is something nice in the little ragged regiment for all; the blackguards seem to me to smile, to have a kind of childish treble note that sounds in my ears freshly; not song, if you will, but a child's voice.

I was glad you enjoyed your visit to the States. Most Englishmen go there with a confirmed design of patronage, as they go to France for that matter; and patronage will not pay. Besides, in this year of—grace, said I?—of disgrace, who should creep so low as an Englishman? "It is not to be thought of that the flood"—ah, Wordsworth, you would change your note were you alive to-day!

I am now a beastly householder, but have not yet entered on my domain. When I do, the social revolution will probably cast me back upon my dung heap. There is a person called Hyndman whose eye is on me; his step is beHynd me as I go. I shall call my house Skerryvore when I get it: SKERRYVORE: *c'est bon pour la poéshie.* I will conclude with my favourite sentiment: "The world is too much with me."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON,
The Hermit of Skerryvore.

Author of "John Vane Tempest: a Romance," "Herbert and Henrietta: or the Nemesis of Sentiment," "The Life and Adventures of Colonel Bludyer Fortescue," "Happy Homes and Hairy Faces," "A Pound of Feathers and a Pound of Lead," part author of "Minn's Complete Capricious Correspondent: a Manual of Natty, Natural, and Knowing Letters," and editor of the "Poetical Remains of Samuel Burt Crabbe, known as the melodious Bottle-Holder."

Uniform with the above:

"The Life and Remains of the Reverend Jacob Degray Squah," author of "Heave-yo for the New Jerusalem," "A Box of Candles; or the Patent Spiritual Safety Match," and "A Day with the Heavenly Harriers."

To W. H. Low

The "dedication" referred to was that of a forthcoming illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*.

Bonallie Towers, Bournemouth, March 13, 1885

MY DEAR LOW,—Your success has been immense. I wish your letter had come two days ago: *Otto*, alas! has been disposed of a good while ago; but it was only day before yesterday that I settled the new volumes of Arabs. However, for the future, you and the sons of the deified Scribner are the men for me. Really they have behaved

most handsomely. I cannot lay my hand on the papers, or I would tell you exactly how it compares with my English bargain; but it compares well. Ah, if we had that copyright, I do believe it would go far to make me solvent, ill-health and all.

I wrote you a letter to the Rembrandt, in which I stated my views about the dedication in a very brief form. It will give me sincere pleasure, and will make the second dedication I have received, the other being from John Addington Symonds. It is a compliment I value much; I don't know any that I should prefer.

I am glad to hear you have windows to do; that is a fine business, I think; but, alas! the glass is so bad nowadays; realism invading even that, as well as the huge inferiority of our technical resource corrupting every tint. Still, anything that keeps a man to decoration is, in this age, good for the artist's spirit.

By the way, have you seen James and me on the novel? James, I think in the August or September—R. L. S. in the December *Longman*. I own I think the *école bête*, of which I am the champion, has the whip hand of the argument; but as James is to make a rejoinder, I must not boast. Anyway the controversy is amusing to see. I was terribly tied down to space, which has made the end congested and dull. I shall see if I can afford to send you the April *Contemporary*—but I daresay you see it anyway—as it will contain a paper of mine on style, a sort of continuation of old arguments on art in which you have wagged a most effective tongue. It is a sort of start upon my Treatise on the Art of Literature: a small, arid book that shall some day appear.

With every good wish from me and mine (should I not say "she and hers"?) to you and yours, believe me yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To P. G. Hamerton

The work of his correspondent's which R. L. S. notices in the following is the sumptuous volume *Landscape;* Seeley & Co., 1885. The passages specially referred to will be found pp. 46-62 of that work.

Bournemouth, March 16, 1885

My dear Hamerton,—Various things have been reminding me of my misconduct: First, Swan's application for your address; second, a sight of the sheets of your *Landscape* book; and last, your note to Swan, which he was so kind as to forward. I trust you will never suppose me to be guilty of anything more serious than an idleness, partially excusable. My ill-health makes my rate of life heavier than I can well meet, and yet stops me from earning more. My conscience, sometimes perhaps too easily stifled, but still (for my time of life and the public manners of the age) fairly well alive, forces me to perpetual and almost endless transcriptions. On the back of all this, my correspondence hangs like a thundercloud; and just when I think I am getting through my troubles, crack, down goes my health, I have a long, costly sickness, and begin the world again. It is fortunate for me I have a father, or I should long ago have died; but the opportunity of the aid makes the necessity none the more welcome. My father has presented me with a beautiful house here—or so I believe, for I have not yet seen it, being a cage bird but for nocturnal sorties in the garden. I hope we shall soon move into it, and I tell myself that some day perhaps we may have the pleasure of seeing you as our guest. I trust at least that you will take me as I am, a thoroughly bad correspondent, and a man, a hater, indeed, of rudeness in others, but too often rude in all unconsciousness himself; and that you will never cease to believe the sincere sympathy and admiration that I feel for you and for your work.

About the *Landscape*, which I had a glimpse of while a friend of mine was preparing a review, I was greatly interested, and could write and wrangle for a year on every page, one passage particularly delighted me, the part about

Ulysses—jolly. Then, you know, that is just what I fear I have come to think landscape ought to be in literature; so there we should be at odds. Or perhaps not so much as I suppose, as Montaigne says it is a pot with two handles, and I own I am wedded to the technical handle, which (I likewise own and freely) you do well to keep for a mistress. I should much like to talk with you about some other points; it is only in talk that one gets to understand. Your delightful Wordsworth trap I have tried on two hardened Wordsworthians, not that I am not one myself. By covering up the context, and asking them to guess what the passage was, both (and both are very clever people, one a writer, one a painter) pronounced it a guide-book. "Do you think it an unusually good guide-book?" I asked, and both said, "No, not at all!" Their grimace was a picture when I showed the original.

I trust your health and that of Mrs. Hamerton keep better; your last account was a poor one. I was unable to make out the visit I had hoped, as (I do not know if you heard of it) I had a very violent and dangerous hemorrhage last spring. I am almost glad to have seen death so close with all my wits about me, and not in the customary lassitude and disenchantment of disease. Even thus clearly beheld I find him not so terrible as we suppose. But, indeed, with the passing of years, the decay of strength, the loss of all my old active and pleasant habits, there grows more and more upon me that belief in the kindness of this scheme of things, and the goodness of our veiled God, which is an excellent and pacifying compensation. I trust, if your health continues to trouble you, you may find some of the same belief. But perhaps my fine discovery is a piece of art, and belongs to a character cowardly, intolerant of certain feelings, and apt to self-deception. I don't think so, however; and when I feel what a weak and fallible vessel I was thrust into this hurly-burly, and with what marvellous kindness the wind has been tempered to my frailties, I think I should be a strange kind of ass to feel anything but gratitude.

I do not know why I should inflict this talk upon you,

but when I summon the rebellious pen, he must go his own way; I am no Michael Scott, to rule the fiend of correspondence. Most days he will none of me; and when he comes, it is to rape me where he will.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Stevenson was by this time beginning to realise that work at play-writing in collaboration with Mr. Henley was doing much more to exhaust his strength than to replenish either of their purses, and Mr. Henley, who had built hopes of fame and fortune on their collaboration, was very unwilling to face the fact.

[*Bournemouth, March*, 1885]

MY DEAR LAD,—That is all right, and a good job. About coming down, you cannot get into us for a while, as you may imagine; we are in desperate vortex, and everybody 'most dead. I have been two days in bed with liver and slight bleeding.

Do you think you are right to send *Macaire* and the *Admiral* about? Not a copy have I sent, nor (speaking for myself personally) do I want sent. The reperusal of the *Admiral*, by the way, was a sore blow; eh, God, man, it is a low, black, dirty, blackguard, ragged piece: vomitable in many parts—simply vomitable. Pew is in places a reproach of both art and man. But of all that afterwards. What I mean is that I believe in playing dark with second and third-rate work. *Macaire* is a piece of job-work, hurriedly bockled; might have been worse, might have been better; happy-go-lucky; act it or-let-it-rot piece of business. Not a thing, I think, to send in presentations. Do not let us *gober* ourselves—and, above all, not *gober* dam pot-boilers—and p.b.'s with an obvious flaw and hole in them, such as is our unrealised Bertrand in this one. But of this also, on a meeting.

I am not yet done with my proofs, I am sorry to say; so soon as I am, I must tackle *Kidnapped* seriously, or be

content to have no bread, which you would scarcely recommend. It is all I shall be able to do to wait for the *Young Folk* money, on which I'll have to live as best I can till the book comes in.

Plays at that rate I do not think I can possibly look at before July; so let that be a guide to you in your views. July, or August, or September, or thereabouts: these must be our times, whichever we attack. I think you had better suspend a visit till we can take you in and till I can speak. It seems a considerable waste of money; above all, as just now I could not even offer you meals with my woman in such a state of overwork. My father and mother have had to go to lodgings.—Post.

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

[*Bournemouth, March*, 1885]

Dear Lad,—Much better, but rather unequal to do what I ought, a common complaint. The change of weather much helped me, not too soon.

I have thought as well as I could of what you said; and I come unhesitatingly to the opinion that the stage is only a lottery, must not be regarded as a trade, and must never be preferred to drudgery. If money comes from any play, let us regard it as a legacy, but never count upon it in our income for the year. In other words, I must go on and drudge at *Kidnapped*, which I hate, and am unfit to do; and you will have to get some journalism somehow. These are my cold and blighting sentiments. It is bad enough to have to live by an art—but to think to live by an art combined with commercial speculation—that way madness lies.

Time is our only friend. The *Admiral*, pulled simply in pieces and about half deleted, will act some day: such is my opinion. I can no more.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

An anonymous review of the *Child's Garden*, appearing in March, gave R. L. S. so much pleasure that he wrote (in the four words, "Now who are you?") to inquire the name of its writer, and learned that it was Mr. Archer; with whom he had hitherto had no acquaintance. He thereupon entered into friendly correspondence with his critic.

Bournemouth, March 29, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—Yes, I have heard of you and read some of your work; but I am bound in particular to thank you for the notice of my verses. "There," I said, throwing it over to the friend who was staying with me, "it's worth writing a book to draw an article like that." Had you been as hard upon me as you were amiable, I try to tell myself I should have been no blinder to the merits of your notice. For I saw there, to admire and to be very grateful for, a most sober, agile pen; an enviable touch; the marks of a reader, such as one imagines for one's self in dreams, thoughtful, critical, and kind; and to put the top on this memorial column, a greater readiness to describe the author criticised than to display the talents of his censor.

I am a man *blasé* to injudicious praise (though I hope some of it may be judicious too), but I have to thank you for THE BEST CRITICISM I EVER HAD; and am therefore, dear Mr. Archer, the most grateful critickee now extant.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S.—I congratulate you on living in the corner of all London that I like best. *À propos*, you are very right about my voluntary aversion from the painful sides of life. My childhood was in reality a very mixed experience, full of fever, nightmare, insomnia, painful days and interminable nights; and I can speak with less authority of gardens than of that other "land of counterpane." But to what end should we renew these sorrows? The sufferings of life may be handled by the very greatest in their hours of insight; it is of its pleasures that our common poems should be formed; these are the experiences that we should seek to recall or to provoke; and I say with Thoreau, "What

right have I to complain, who have not ceased to wonder ? " and, to add a rider of my own, who have no remedy to offer.

R. L. S.

To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Pennell

Acknowledging the dedication of an illustrated *Canterbury Pilgrimage*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1885]

Dear Sir and Madam,—This horrible delay must be forgiven me. It was not caused by any want of gratitude ; but by the desire to acknowledge the dedication more suitably (and to display my wit) in a copy of verses. Well, now I give that up, and tell you in plain prose, that you have given me much pleasure by the dedication of your graceful book.

As I was writing the above, I received a visit from Lady Shelley, who mentioned to me that she was reading Mrs. Pennell's *Mary Wollstonecraft* with pleasure. It is odd how streams cross. Mr. Pennell's work I have, of course, long known and admired : and I believe there was once some talk, on the part of Mr. Gilder, that we should work together ; but the scheme fell through from my rapacity ; and since then has been finally rendered impossible (or so I fear) by my health.

I should say that when I received the *Pilgrimage*, I was in a state (not at all common with me) of depression ; and the pleasant testimony that my work had not all been in vain did much to set me up again. You will therefore understand, late as is the hour, with what sincerity I am able to sign myself—Gratefully yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

mr. and mrs. pennell,—I see I should explain that this is all in my own hand, I have not fobbed you off with an amanuensis ; but as I have two hand-writings (both equally bad in these days) I might lead you to think so.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

On the death of Professor Fleeming Jenkin, who in Stevenson's early student days at Edinburgh had been both the warmest and the wisest of his elder friends (died June 12, 1885).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1885]

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—You know how much and for how long I have loved, respected, and admired him; I am only able to feel a little with you. But I know how he would have wished us to feel. I never knew a better man, nor one to me more lovable; we shall all feel the loss more greatly as time goes on. It scarce seems life to me; what must it be to you? Yet one of the last things that he said to me was, that from all these sad bereavements of yours he had learned only more than ever to feel the goodness and what we, in our feebleness, call the support of God; he had been ripening so much—to other eyes than ours, we must suppose he was ripe, and try to feel it. I feel it is better not to say much more. It will be to me a great pride to write a notice of him: the last I can now do. What more in any way I can do for you, please to think and let me know. For his sake and for your own, I would not be a useless friend: I know, you know me a most warm one: please command me or my wife, in any way. Do not trouble to write to me; Austin, I have no doubt, will do so, if you are, as I fear you will be, unfit.

My heart is sore for you. At least you know what you have been to him; how he cherished and admired you; how he was never so pleased as when he spoke of you; with what a boy's love, up to the last, he loved you. This surely is a consolation. Yours is the cruel part—to survive; you must try and not grudge to him his better fortune, to go first. It is the sad part of such relations that one must remain and suffer; I cannot see my poor Jenkin without you. Nor you indeed without him; but you may try to rejoice that he is spared that extremity. Perhaps I (as I was so much his confidant) know even better than you can do what your loss would have been to him; he never spoke

of you but his face changed : it was—you were—his religion.

I write by this post to Austin and to the *Academy*.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June*, 1885]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—I should have written sooner, but we are in a bustle, and I have been very tired, though still well. Your very kind note was most welcome to me. I shall be very much pleased to have you call me Louis, as he has now done for so many years. Sixteen, you say ? is it so long ? It seems too short now ; but of that we cannot judge, and must not complain.

I wish that either I or my wife could do anything for you ; when we can, you will, I am sure, command us.

I trust that my notice gave you as little pain as was possible. I found I had so much to say, that I preferred to keep it for another place and make but a note in the *Academy*. To try to draw my friend at greater length, and say what he was to me and his intimates, what a good influence in life and what an example, is a desire that grows upon me. It was strange, as I wrote the note, how his old tests and criticisms haunted me ; and it reminded me afresh with every few words how much I owe to him.

I had a note from Henley, very brief and very sad. We none of us yet feel the loss ; but we know what he would have said and wished.

Do you know that Dew Smith has two photographs of him, neither very bad ? and one giving a lively, though not flattering air of him in conversation ? If you have not got them, would you like me to write to Dew and ask him to give you proofs ?

I was so pleased that he and my wife made friends ; that is a great pleasure. We found and have preserved one fragment (the head) of the drawing he made and tore up

when he was last here. He had promised to come and stay with us this summer. May we not hope, at least, some time soon to have one from you?—Believe me, my dear Mrs. Jenkin, with the most real sympathy, your sincere friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Dear me, what happiness I owe to both of you!

TO C. HOWARD CARRINGTON

In answer to an inquiry from a correspondent not personally known to him, who had by some means heard of the *Great North Road* project.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June 9th [1885]

DEAR SIR,—*The Great North Road* is still unfinished; it is scarce I should say beyond Highgate: but it will be finished some day, bar the big accident. It will not however gratify your taste; the highwayman is not grasped: what you would have liked (and I, believe me) would have been *Jerry Abershaw:* but Jerry was not written at the fit moment; I have outgrown the taste—and his romantic horse-shoes clatter faintlier down the incline towards Lethe.—Truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Bournemouth, July 31, 1885

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—We are having great doings. The drawing-room will soon be lovely, and we bankrupt. It will be very quaint, but a very pleasing and harmonious room, and rich, too; and with the picture, a Great Spot altogether. The tricycle arrived here in delicate health, and has since boarded at the house of a perfidious tradesman; when we shall again behold it, the p.t. alone can say. I am very glad you have Mr. Bremmer with you; that will be a great comfort; please remember me to him kindly. If I were my mother, I should draw it mild with

the Irish Cars. I don't believe they are good for her at all; or at least in excess. Did you hear that I had given way to a convex mirror in the dining-room? It is sublime; no picture can be so decorative and cheerful. My mind shows symptoms, I think, of reawakening; high time, by George! Sargent comes to paint me again. Bob, Louisa, Portle, Lemon and Mrs. Lemon are down at Poole, where Coggie goes to-day to make room for Henley for two days.—I am,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. de Mattos

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Summer, 1885

My dear Katharine,—'Tis the most complete blague and folly to write to you; you never answer and, even when you do, your letters crackle under the teeth like ashes; containing nothing as they do but unseasonable japes and a great cloudy vagueness as of the realm of chaos. In this I know well they are like mine; and it becomes me well to write such—but not you—for reasons too obvious to mention. We have both been sick; but to-day I am up, though with an aching back. But I hope all will be better. Of your views, state, finances, etc., etc., I know nothing. We were mighty near the end of all things financially, when a strange shape of a hand giving appeared in Heaven or from Hell, and set us up again for the moment; yet still we totter on a whoreson brink. I beg pardon. I forgot I was writing to a lady; but the word shall stay: it is the only word; I would say it to the Q——n of E——d.

How do you like letters of this kind? It is your kind. They mean nothing; they are blankly insignificant; and impudently put one in the wrong. One has learnt nothing; and forsooth one must reply.—Yours, the Inexpressive Correspondent,

R. L. S.

Hey-ey-ey! Sold again. Hey-ey-ey!
Postscript: sold again.

To W. H. Low

In August of this year Stevenson made with his wife an excursion to the west country (stopping at Dorchester on the way, for the pleasure of seeing Mr. Thomas Hardy at home), and was detained for several weeks at Exeter by a bad fit of hemorrhage. His correspondence is not resumed until the autumn.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 22, 1885

MY DEAR LOW,—I trust you are not annoyed with me beyond forgiveness; for indeed my silence has been devilish prolonged. I can only tell you that I have been nearly six months (more than six) in a strange condition of collapse, when it was impossible to do any work, and difficult (more difficult than you would suppose) to write the merest note. I am now better, but not yet my own man in the way of brains, and in health only so-so. I suppose I shall learn (I begin to think I am learning) to fight this vast, vague feather-bed of an obsession that now overlies and smothers me; but in the beginnings of these conflicts, the inexperienced wrestler is always worsted, and I own I have been quite extinct. I wish you to know, though it can be no excuse, that you are not the only one of my friends by many whom I have thus neglected; and even now, having come so very late into the possession of myself, with a substantial capital of debts, and my work still moving with a desperate slowness—as a child might fill a sandbag with its little handfuls—and my future deeply pledged, there is almost a touch of virtue in my borrowing these hours to write to you. Why I said "hours" I know not; it would look blue for both of us if I made good the word.

I was writing your address the other day, ordering a copy of my next, *Prince Otto*, to go your way. I hope you have not seen it in parts; it was not meant to be so read; and only my poverty (dishonourably) consented to the serial evolution.

I will send you with this a copy of the English edition of the *Child's Garden*. I have heard there is some vile rule of the post-office in the States against inscriptions; so I

send herewith a piece of doggerel which Mr. Bunner may, if he thinks fit, copy off the fly-leaf.

Sargent was down again and painted a portrait of me walking about in my own dining-room, in my own velveteen jacket, and twisting as I go my own moustache; at one corner a glimpse of my wife, in an Indian dress, and seated in a chair that was once my grandfather's—but since some months goes by the name of Henry James's, for it was there the novelist loved to sit—adds a touch of poesy and comicality. It is, I think, excellent, but is too eccentric to be exhibited. I am at one extreme corner; my wife, in this wild dress, and looking like a ghost, is at the extreme other end; between us an open door exhibits my palatial entrance hall and a part of my respected staircase. All this is touched in lovely, with that witty touch of Sargent's; but, of course, it looks dam queer as a whole.

Pray let me hear from you, and give me good news of yourself and your wife, to whom please remember me.—Yours most sincerely, my dear Low,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

Prince Otto was published in October of this year; and the following refers to two reviews of it—one of them by Mr. Henley, which to the writer's displeasure had been pruned by the editor before printing; the other by a writer in the *Saturday Review* who declared that Otto was "a fool and a wittol," and could see nothing but false style in the story of Seraphina's flight through the forest.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Autumn*, 1885]

DEAR LAD,—If there was any more praise in what you wrote, I think [the editor] has done us both a service; some of it stops my throat. What, it would not have been the same if Dumas or Musset had done it, would it not? Well, no, I do not think it would, do you know, now; I am really of opinion it would not; and a dam good job too. Why, think what Musset would have made of Otto! Think how gallantly Dumas would have carried his crowd

through! And whatever you do, don't quarrel with ——. It gives me much pleasure to see your work there; I think you do yourself great justice in that field; and I would let no annoyance, petty or justifiable, debar me from such a market. I think you do good there. Whether (considering our intimate relations) you would not do better to refrain from reviewing me, I will leave to yourself: were it all on my side, you could foresee my answer; but there is your side also, where you must be the judge.

As for the *Saturday*. Otto is no "fool," the reader is left in no doubt as to whether or not Seraphina was a Messalina (though much it would matter, if you come to that); and therefore on both these points the reviewer has been unjust. Secondly, the romance lies precisely in the freeing of two spirits from these court intrigues; and here I think the reviewer showed himself dull. Lastly, if Otto's speech is offensive to him, he is one of the large class of unmanly and ungenerous dogs who arrogate and defile the name of manly. As for the passages quoted, I do confess that some of them reek Gongorically; they are excessive, but they are not inelegant after all. However, had he attacked me only there, he would have scored.

Your criticism on Gondremark is, I fancy, right. I thought all your criticisms were indeed; only your praise—chokes me.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To William Archer

The paper referred to in this and the following letters is one which Mr. Archer wrote over his own signature in the November number of *Time*, a magazine long since extinct.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—I have read your paper with my customary admiration; it is very witty, very adroit; it contains a great deal that is excellently true (particularly the parts about my stories and the description of me as an artist in life); but you will not be surprised if I do not

think it altogether just. It seems to me, in particular, that you have wilfully read all my works in terms of my earliest; my aim, even in style, has quite changed in the last six or seven years; and this I should have thought you would have noticed. Again, your first remark upon the affectation of the italic names; a practice only followed in my two affected little books of travel, where a typographical *minauderie* of the sort appeared to me in character; and what you say of it, then, is quite just. But why should you forget yourself and use these same italics as an index to my theology some pages further on? This is lightness of touch indeed; may I say, it is almost sharpness of practice?

Excuse these remarks. I have been on the whole much interested, and sometimes amused. Are you aware that the praiser of this "brave gymnasium" has not seen a canoe nor taken a long walk since '79? that he is rarely out of the house nowadays, and carries his arm in a sling? Can you imagine that he is a backslidden communist, and is sure he will go to hell (if there be such an excellent institution) for the luxury in which he lives? And can you believe that, though it is gaily expressed, the thought is hag and skeleton in every moment of vacuity or depression? Can you conceive how profoundly I am irritated by the opposite affectation to my own, when I see strong men and rich men bleating about their sorrows and the burthen of life, in a world full of "cancerous paupers," and poor sick children, and the fatally bereaved, ay, and down even to such happy creatures as myself, who has yet been obliged to strip himself, one after another, of all the pleasures that he had chosen except smoking (and the days of that I know in my heart ought to be over), I forgot eating, which I still enjoy, and who sees the circle of impotence closing very slowly but quite steadily around him? In my view, one dank, dispirited word is harmful, a crime of *lèse-humanité*, a piece of acquired evil; every gay, every bright word or picture, like every pleasant air of music, is a piece of pleasure set afloat; the reader catches it, and, if he be healthy, goes on his way rejoicing, and it is the business of art so to send him, as often as possible.

For what you say, so kindly, so prettily, so precisely, of my style, I must in particular thank you; though even here, I am vexed you should not have remarked on my attempted change of manner: seemingly this attempt is still quite unsuccessful! Well, we shall fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.

And now for my last word: Mrs. Stevenson is very anxious that you should see me, and that she should see you, in the flesh. If you at all share in these views, I am a fixture. Write or telegraph (giving us time, however, to telegraph in reply, lest the day be impossible), and come down here to a bed and a dinner. What do you say, my dear critic? I shall be truly pleased to see you; and to explain at greater length what I meant by saying narrative was the most characteristic mood of literature, on which point I have great hopes I shall persuade you.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—My opinion about Thoreau, and the passage in *The Week*, is perhaps a fad, but it is sincere and stable. I am still of the same mind five years later; did you observe that I had said "modern" authors? and will you observe again that this passage touches the very joint of our division? It is one that appeals to me, deals with that part of life that I think the most important, and you, if I gather rightly, so much less so? You believe in the extreme moment of the facts that humanity has acquired and is acquiring; I think them of moment, but still of much less than those inherent or inherited brute principles and laws that sit upon us (in the character of conscience) as heavy as a shirt of mail, and that (in the character of the affections and the airy spirit of pleasure) make all the light of our lives. The house is, indeed, a great thing, and should be rearranged on sanitary principles; but my heart and all my interest are with the dweller, that ancient of days and day-old infant man.

R. L. S.

An excellent touch is p. 584. "By instinct or design he

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eschews what demands constructive patience." I believe it is both ; my theory is that literature must always be most at home in treating movement and change ; hence I look for them.

To Thomas Stevenson

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 28, 1885

My dearest Father,—Get the November number of *Time*, and you will see a review of me by a very clever fellow, who is quite furious at bottom because I am too orthodox, just as Purcell was savage because I am not orthodox enough. I fall between two stools. It is odd, too, to see how this man thinks me a full-blooded fox-hunter, and tells me my philosophy would fail if I lost my health or had to give up exercise !

An illustrated *Treasure Island* will be out next month. I have had an early copy, and the French pictures are admirable. The artist has got his types up in Hogarth ; he is full of fire and spirit, can draw and can compose, and has understood the book as I meant it, all but one or two little accidents, such as making the *Hispaniola* a brig. I would send you my copy, *but I cannot ;* it is my new toy, and I cannot divorce myself from this enjoyment.

I am keeping really better, and have been out about every second day, though the weather is cold and very wild.

I was delighted to hear you were keeping better ; you and Archer would agree, more shame to you ! (Archer is my pessimist critic.) Good-bye to all of you, with my best love. We had a dreadful overhauling of my conduct as a son the other night ; and my wife stripped me of my illusions and made me admit I had been a detestable bad one. Of one thing in particular she convicted me in my own eyes : I mean, a most unkind reticence, which hung on me then, and I confess still hangs on me now, when I try to assure you that I do love you.—Ever your bad son,

Robert Louis Stevenson

To Henry James

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, October 28, 1885

My dear Henry James,—At last, my wife being at a concert, and a story being done, I am at some liberty to write and give you of my views. And first, many thanks for the works that came to my sickbed. And second, and more important, as to the *Princess*.* Well, I think you are going to do it this time; I cannot, of course, foresee, but these two first numbers seem to me picturesque and sound and full of lineament, and very much a new departure. As for your young lady, she is all there; yes, sir, you can do low life, I believe. The prison was excellent; it was of that nature of touch that I sometimes achingly miss from your former work: with some of the grime, that is, and some of the emphasis of skeleton there is in nature. I pray you to take grime in a good sense; it need not be ignoble; dirt may have dignity; in nature it usually has; and your prison was imposing.

And now to the main point; why do we not see you? Do not fail us. Make an alarming sacrifice, and let us see "Henry James's chair" properly occupied. I never sit in it myself (though it was my grandfather's); it has been consecrated to guests by your approval, and now stands at my elbow gaping. We have a new room, too, to introduce to you—our last baby, the drawing-room; it never cries, and has cut its teeth. Likewise, there is a cat now. It promises to be a monster of laziness and self-sufficiency.

Pray see, in the November *Time* (a dread name for a magazine of light reading), a very clever fellow, W. Archer, stating his views of me; the rosy-gilled "athletico-æsthete"; and warning me, in a fatherly manner, that a rheumatic fever would try my philosophy (as indeed it would), and that my gospel would not do for "those who are shut out from the exercise of any manly virtue save renunciation." To those who know that rickety and cloistered spectre, the real R. L. S., the paper, besides being

* *Princess Casamassima.*

clever in itself, presents rare elements of sport. The critical parts are in particular very bright and neat, and often excellently true. Get it by all manner of means.

I hear on all sides I am to be attacked as an immoral writer; this is painful. Have I at last got, like you, to the pitch of being attacked? 'Tis the consecration I lack—and could do without. Not that Archer's paper is an attack, or what either he or I, I believe, would call one; 'tis the attacks on my morality (which I had thought a gem of the first water) I referred to.

Now, my dear James, come—come—come. The spirit (that is me) says, Come; and the bride (and that is my wife) says, Come; and the best thing you can do for us and yourself and your work is to get up and do so right away.—Yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO WILLIAM ARCHER

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *October* 30, 1885

DEAR MR. ARCHER,—It is possible my father may be soon down with me; he is an old man and in bad health and spirits; and I could neither leave him alone nor could we talk freely before him. If he should be here when you offer your visit, you will understand if I have to say no, and put you off.

I quite understand your not caring to refer to things of private knowledge. What still puzzles me is how you (" in the witness box "—ha! I like the phrase) should have made your argument actually hinge on a contention which the facts answered.

I am pleased to hear of the correctness of my guess. It is then as I supposed; you are of the school of the generous and not the sullen pessimists; and I can feel with you. I used myself to rage when I saw sick folk going by in their Bath-chairs; since I have been sick myself (and always when I was sick myself), I found life, even in its rough places, to have a property of easiness. That which we

suffer ourselves has no longer the same air of monstrous injustice and wanton cruelty that suffering wears when we see it in the case of others. So we begin gradually to see that things are not black, but have their strange compensations; and when they draw towards their worst, the idea of death is like a bed to lie on. I should bear false witness if I did not declare life happy. And your wonderful statement that happiness tends to die out and misery to continue, which was what put me on the track of your frame of mind, is diagnostic of the happy man raging over the misery of others; it could never be written by the man who had tried what unhappiness was like. And at any rate, it was a slip of the pen: the ugliest word that science has to declare is a reserved indifference to happiness and misery in the individual; it declares no leaning towards the black, no iniquity on the large scale in fate's doings, rather a marble equality, dread not cruel, giving and taking away and reconciling.

Why have I not written my *Timon?* Well, here is my worst quarrel with you. You take my young books as my last word. The tendency to try to say more has passed unperceived (my fault, that). And you make no allowance for the slowness with which a man finds and tries to learn his tools. I began with a neat brisk little style, and a sharp little knack of partial observation; I have tried to expand my means, but still I can only utter a part of what I wish to say, and am bound to feel; and much of it will die unspoken. But if I had the pen of Shakespeare, I have no *Timon* to give forth. I feel kindly to the powers that be; I marvel they should use me so well; and when I think of the case of others, I wonder too, but in another vein, whether they may not, whether they must not, be like me, still with some compensation, some delight. To have suffered, nay, to suffer, sets a keen edge on what remains of the agreeable. This is a great truth, and has to be learned in the fire.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

We expect you, remember that.

To William Archer

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, November 1, 1885

Dear Mr. Archer,—You will see that I had already had a sight of your article and what were my thoughts.

One thing in your letter puzzles me. Are you, too, not in the witness-box? And if you are, why take a wilfully false hypothesis? If you knew I was a chronic invalid, why say that my philosophy was unsuitable to such a case? My call for facts is not so general as yours, but an essential fact should not be put the other way about.

The fact is, consciously or not, you doubt my honesty; you think I am making faces, and at heart disbelieve my utterances. And this I am disposed to think must spring from your having not had enough of pain, sorrow, and trouble in your existence. It is easy to have too much; easy also or possible to have too little; enough is required that a man may appreciate what elements of consolation and joy there are in everything but absolutely overpowering physical pain or disgrace, and how in almost all circumstances the human soul can play a fair part. You fear life, I fancy, on the principle of the hand of little employment. But perhaps my hypothesis is as unlike the truth as the one you chose. Well, if it be so, if you have had trials, sickness, the approach of death, the alienation of friends, poverty at the heels, and have not felt your soul turn round upon these things and spurn them under—you must be very differently made from me, and I earnestly believe from the majority of men. But at least you are in the right to wonder and complain.

To "say all"? Stay here. All at once? That would require a word from the pen of Gargantua. We say each particular thing as it comes up, and "with that sort of emphasis that for the time there seems to be no other." Words will not otherwise serve us; no, nor even Shakespeare, who could not have put *As You Like It* and *Timon* into one without ruinous loss both of emphasis and substance. Is it quite fair then to keep your face so steadily

on my most light-hearted works, and then say I recognise no evil? Yet in the paper on Burns, for instance, I show myself alive to some sorts of evil. But then, perhaps, they are not your sorts.

And again: "to say all"? All: yes. Everything: no. The task were endless, the effect nil. But my all, in such a vast field as this of life, is what interests me, what stands out, what takes on itself a presence for my imagination or makes a figure in that little tricky abbreviation which is the best that my reason can conceive. That I must treat, or I shall be fooling with my readers. That, and not the all of some one else.

And here we come to the division: not only do I believe that literature should give joy, but I see a universe, I suppose, eternally different from yours; a solemn, a terrible, but a very joyous and noble universe, where suffering is not at least wantonly inflicted, though it falls with dispassionate partiality, but where it may be and generally is nobly borne; where, above all (this I believe; probably you don't: I think he may, with cancer), *any brave man may make* out a life which shall be happy for himself, and, by so being, beneficent to those about him. And if he fails, why should I hear him weeping? I mean if I fail, why should I weep? Why should *you* hear *me?* Then to me morals, the conscience, the affections, and the passions are, I will own frankly and sweepingly, so infinitely more important than the other parts of life, that I conceive men rather triflers who become immersed in the latter; and I will always think the man who keeps his lip stiff, and makes "a happy fireside clime," and carries a pleasant face about to friends and neighbours, infinitely greater (in the abstract) than an atrabilious Shakespeare or a backbiting Kant or Darwin. No offence to any of these gentlemen, two of whom probably (one for certain) came up to my standard.

And now enough said; it were hard if a poor man could not criticise another without having so much ink shed against him. But I shall still regret you should have written on an hypothesis you knew to be untenable, and that you should thus have made your paper, for those who

do not know me, essentially unfair. The rich, fox-hunting squire speaks with one voice; the sick man of letters with another.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.
(*Prometheus-Heine in minimis*)

P.S.—Here I go again. To me, the medicine bottles on my chimney and the blood on my handkerchief are accidents; they do not colour my view of life, as you would know, I think, if you had experience of sickness; they do not exist in my prospect; I would as soon drag them under the eyes of my readers as I would mention a pimple I might chance to have (saving your presence) on my posteriors. What does it prove? what does it change? it has not hurt, it has not changed me in any essential part; and I should think myself a trifler and in bad taste if I introduced the world to these unimportant privacies.

But, again, there is this mountain-range between us—*that you do not believe me*. It is not flattering, but the fault is probably in my literary art.

To W. H. Low

The "other thing coming out" mentioned below in the last paragraph but one was *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, December 26, 1885

MY DEAR LOW,—*Lamia* has not yet turned up, but your letter came to me this evening with a scent of the Boulevard Montparnasse that was irresistible. The sand of Lavenue's crumbled under my heel; and the bouquet of the old Fleury came back to me, and I remembered the day when I found a twenty franc piece under my fetish. Have you that fetish still? and has it brought you luck? I remembered, too, my first sight of you in a frock-coat and a smoking-cap, when we passed the evening at the Café de Medicis; and my last when we sat and talked in the Parc Monceau; and all these things made me feel a little young again, which,

to one who has been mostly in bed for a month, was a vivifying change.

Yes, you are lucky to have a bag that holds you comfortably. Mine is a strange contrivance; I don't die, damme, and I can't get along on both feet to save my soul; I am a chronic sickist; and my work cripples along between bed and the parlour, between the medicine bottle and the cupping glass. Well, I like my life all the same; and should like it none the worse if I could have another talk with you, though even my talks now are measured out to me by the minute hand like poisons in a minim glass.

A photograph will be taken of my ugly mug and sent to you for ulterior purposes: I have another thing coming out, which I did not put in the way of the Scribners, I can scarce tell how; but I was sick and penniless and rather back on the world, and mismanaged it. I trust they will forgive me.

I am sorry to hear of Mrs. Low's illness, and glad to hear of her recovery. I will announce the coming *Lamia* to Bob; he steams away at literature like smoke. I have a beautiful Bob on my walls, and a good Sargent, and a delightful Lemon; and your etching now hangs framed in the dining-room. So the arts surround me.—Yours,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. de Mattos

With this cousin the writer had always been on terms of close affection, and he now dedicated to her *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* In the dedication as published only the second verse stands.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January* 1*st*, 1886

Dearest Katharine,—Here, on a very little book and accompanied with lame verses, I have put your name. Our kindness is now getting well on in years; it must be nearly of age; and it gets more valuable to me with every time I see you. It is not possible to express any sentiment,

and it is not necessary to try, at least between us. You know very well that I love you dearly, and that I always will. I only wish the verses were better, but at least you like the story; and it is sent to you by the one that loves you—Jekyll, and not Hyde.

R. L. S.

Ave!

Bells upon the city are ringing in the night;
High above the gardens are the houses full of light;
On the heathy Pentlands is the curlew flying free;
And the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie.

We cannae break the bonds that God decreed to bind,
Still we'll be the children of the heather and the wind;
Far away from home, O, it's still for you and me
That the broom is blowing bonnie in the north countrie!

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan.* 1*st*, 1886

My dear Kinnicum,*—I am a very bad dog, but not for the first time. Your book, which is very interesting, came duly; and I immediately got a very bad cold indeed, and have been fit for nothing whatever. I am a bit better now, and aye on the mend; so I write to tell you, I thought of you on New Year's Day; though, I own, it would have been more decent if I had thought in time for you to get my letter then. Well, what can't be cured must be endured, Mr. Lawrie; and you must be content with what I give. If I wrote all the letters I ought to write, and at the proper time, I should be very good and very happy; but I doubt if I should do anything else.

I suppose you will be in town for the New Year; and I hope your health is pretty good. What you want is diet; but it is as much use to tell you that as it is to tell my father. And I quite admit a diet is a beastly thing. I doubt,

* Lothian vernacular pronunciation of Cunningham.

however, if it be as bad as not being allowed to speak, which I have tried fully, and do not like. When, at the same time, I was not allowed to read, it passed a joke. But these are troubles of the past, and on this day, at least, it is proper to suppose they won't return. But we are not put here to enjoy ourselves: it was not God's purpose; and I am prepared to argue, it is not our sincere wish. As for our deserts, the less said of them the better, for somebody might hear, and nobody cares to be laughed at. A good man is a very noble thing to see, but not to himself; what he seems to God is, fortunately, not our business; that is the domain of faith; and whether on the first of January or the thirty-first of December, faith is a good word to end on.

My dear Cummy, many happy returns to you and my best love.—The worst correspondent in the world,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MR. AND MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *January 1st*, 1886

MY DEAR PEOPLE,—Many happy returns of the day to you all; I am fairly well and in good spirits; and much and hopefully occupied with dear Jenkin's life. The inquiry in every detail, every letter that I read, makes me think of him more nobly. I cannot imagine how I got his friendship; I did not deserve it. I believe the notice will be interesting and useful.

My father's last letter, owing to the use of a quill pen and the neglect of blotting-paper, was hopelessly illegible. Every one tried, and every one failed to decipher an important word on which the interest of one whole clause (and the letter consisted of two) depended.

I find I can make little more of this; but I'll spare the blots.—Dear people, ever your loving son,

R. L. S.

I will try again, being a giant refreshed by the house

being empty. The presence of people is the great obstacle to letter-writing. I deny that letters should contain news (I mean mine; those of other people should). But mine should contain appropriate sentiments and humorous nonsense, or nonsense without the humour. When the house is empty, the mind is seized with a desire—no, that is too strong—a willingness to pour forth unmitigated rot, which constitutes (in me) the true spirit of correspondence. When I have no remarks to offer (and nobody to offer them to), my pen flies, and you see the remarkable consequence of a page literally covered with words and genuinely devoid of sense. I can always do that, if quite alone, and I like doing it; but I have yet to learn that it is beloved by correspondents. The deuce of it is, that there is no end possible but the end of the paper; and as there is very little left of that—and if I cannot stop writing—suppose you give up reading. It would all come to the same thing; and I think we should all be happier. . . .

To W. H. Low

In the following letter R. L. S. accepts the dedication of Mr. Low's illustrated edition of Keats's *Lamia*, and sends him in return the newly published *Jekyll and Hyde*, and a set of verses afterwards printed in the *Century Magazine* and *Underwoods*, and inscribed by Mr. St. Gaudens on his medallion portrait of the author. The terms of the *Lamia* dedication are as follows: "In testimony of loyal friendship and of a common faith in doubtful tales from Faery-Land, I dedicate to Robert Louis Stevenson my work in this book." The Latin legend inscribed above the design runs: "Neque est ullum certius amicitiae vinculum quam consensus et societas consiliorum et voluntatum."

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *Jan. 2nd*, 1886

MY DEAR LOW,—*Lamia* has come, and I do not know how to thank you, not only for the beautiful art of the designs, but for the handsome and apt words of the dedication. My favourite is "Bathes unseen," which is a masterpiece; and the next, "Into the green recessed woods," is perhaps more remarkable, though it does not take my fancy so imperiously. The night scene at Corinth pleases me

also. The second part offers fewer opportunities. I own I should like to see both *Isabella* and the *Eve* thus illustrated; and then there's *Hyperion*—O, yes, and *Endymion!* I should like to see the lot: beautiful pictures dance before me by hundreds: I believe *Endymion* would suit you best. It also is in faeryland; and I see a hundred opportunities, cloudy and flowery glories, things as delicate as the cobweb in the bush; actions, not in themselves of any mighty purport, but made for the pencil: the feast of Pan, Peona's isle, the "slabbed margin of a well," the chase of the butterfly, the nymph, Glaucus, Cybele, Sleep on his couch, a farrago of unconnected beauties. But I divagate; and all this sits in the bosom of the publisher.

What is more important, I accept the terms of the dedication with a frank heart, and the terms of your Latin legend fairly. The sight of your pictures has once more awakened me to my right mind; something may come of it, yet one more bold push to get free of this prisonyard of the abominably ugly, where I take my daily exercise with my contemporaries. I do not know, I have a feeling in my bones, a sentiment which may take on the forms of imagination, or may not. If it does, I shall owe it to you; and the thing will thus descend from Keats even if on the wrong side of the blanket. If it can be done in prose—that is the puzzle—I divagate again. Thank you again: you can draw and yet you do not love the ugly: what are you doing in this age? Flee, while it is yet time; they will have your four limbs pinned upon a stable door to scare witches. The ugly, my unhappy friend, is *de rigueur:* it is the only wear! What a chance you threw away with the serpent! Why had Apollonius no pimples? Heavens, my dear Low, you do not know your business. . . .

I send you herewith a Gothic gnome for your Greek nymph; but the gnome is interesting, I think, and he came out of a deep mine, where he guards the fountain of tears. It is not always the time to rejoice.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

The gnome's name is *Jekyll & Hyde;* I believe you will

find he is likewise quite willing to answer to the name of Low or Stevenson.

Same day.—I have copied out on the other sheet some bad verses, which somehow your picture suggested; as a kind of image of things that I pursue and cannot reach, and that you seem—no, not to have reached—but to have come a thought nearer to than I. This is the life we have chosen: well, the choice was mad, but I should make it again.

What occurs to me is this: perhaps they might be printed in (say) the *Century* for the sake of my name; and if that were possible, they might advertise your book. It might be headed as sent in acknowledgment of your *Lamia*. Or perhaps it might be introduced by the phrases I have marked above. I daresay they would stick it in: I want no payment, being well paid by *Lamia*. If they are not, keep them to yourself.

To Will H. Low

Damned bad lines in return for a beautiful book

YOUTH now flees on feathered foot.
Faint and fainter sounds the flute;
Rarer songs of Gods.

And still,
Somewhere on the sunny hill,
Or along the winding stream,
Through the willows, flits a dream;
Flits, but shows a smiling face,
Flees, but with so quaint a grace,
None can choose to stay at home,
All must follow—all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she
Now in air floats high and free,
Takes the sun, and breaks the blue;—
Late, with stooping pinion flew

Raking hedgerow trees, and wet
Her wing in silver streams, and set
Shining foot on temple roof.
Now again she flies aloof,
Coasting mountain clouds, and kissed
By the evening's amethyst.

In wet wood and miry lane
Still we pound and pant in vain;
Still with earthy foot we chase
Waning pinion, fainting face;
Still, with grey hair, we stumble on
Till—behold!—the vision gone!
Where has fleeting beauty led?
To the doorway of the dead!
[Life is gone, but life was gay:
We have come the primrose way!] *

R. L. S.

To Edmund Gosse

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886

My dear Gosse,—Thank you for your letter, so interesting to my vanity. There is a review in the *St. James's*, which, as it seems to hold somewhat of your opinions, and is besides written with a pen and not a poker, we think may possibly be yours. The *Prince* † has done fairly well in spite of the reviews, which have been bad; he was, as you doubtless saw, well slated in the *Saturday;* one paper received it as a child's story; another (picture my agony) described it as a "Gilbert comedy." It was amusing to see the race between me and Justin M'Carthy: the Milesian has won by a length.

That is the hard part of literature. You aim high, and

* In *Underwoods* the lines thus bracketed as doubtful stand with the change:

"Life is over; life was gay."

† *Prince Otto.*

you take longer over your work, and it will not be so successful as if you had aimed low and rushed it. What the public likes is work (of any kind) a little loosely executed; so long as it is a little wordy, a little slack, a little dim and knotless, the dear public likes it; it should (if possible) be a little dull into the bargain. I know that good work sometimes hits; but, with my hand on my heart, I think it is by an accident. And I know also that good work must succeed at last; but that is not the doing of the public; they are only shamed into silence or affectation. I do not write for the public; I do write for money, a nobler deity; and most of all for myself, not perhaps any more noble, but both more intelligent and nearer home.

Let us tell each other sad stories of the bestiality of the beast whom we feed. What he likes is the newspaper; and to me the press is the mouth of a sewer, where lying is professed as from an university chair, and everything prurient, and ignoble, and essentially dull, finds its abode and pulpit. I do not like mankind; but men, and not all of these—and fewer women. As for respecting the race, and, above all, that fatuous rabble of burgesses called "the public," God save me from such irreligion!—that way lies disgrace and dishonour. There must be something wrong in me, or I would not be popular.

This is perhaps a trifle stronger than my sedate and permanent opinion. Not much, I think. As for the art that we practise, I have never been able to see why its professors should be respected. They chose the primrose path; when they found it was not all primroses, but some of it brambly, and much of it uphill, they began to think and to speak of themselves as holy martyrs. But a man is never martyred in any honest sense in the pursuit of his pleasure; and *delirium tremens* has more of the honour of the cross. We were full of the pride of life, and chose, like prostitutes, to live by a pleasure. We should be paid if we give the pleasure we pretend to give; but why should we be honoured?

I hope some day you and Mrs. Gosse will come for a Sunday; but we must wait till I am able to see people.

I am very full of Jenkin's life; it is painful, yet very pleasant, to dig into the past of a dead friend, and find him, at every spadeful, shine brighter. I own, as I read, I wonder more and more why he should have taken me to be a friend. He had many and obvious faults upon the face of him; the heart was pure gold. I feel it little pain to have lost him, for it is a loss in which I cannot believe; I take it, against reason, for an absence; if not to-day, then to-morrow, I still fancy I shall see him in the door; and then, now when I know him better, how glad a meeting! Yes, if I could believe in the immortality business, the world would indeed be too good to be true; but we were put here to do what service we can, for honour and not for hire: the sods cover us, and the worm that never dies, the conscience, sleeps well at last; these are the wages, besides what we receive so lavishly day by day; and they are enough for a man who knows his own frailty and sees all things in the proportion of reality. The soul of piety was killed long ago by that idea of reward. Nor is happiness, whether eternal or temporal, the reward that mankind seeks. Happinesses are but his wayside campings; his soul is in the journey; he was born for the struggle, and only tastes his life in effort and on the condition that he is opposed. How, then, is such a creature, so fiery, so pugnacious, so made up of discontent and aspiration, and such noble and uneasy passions—how can he be rewarded but by rest? I would not say it aloud; for man's cherished belief is that he loves that happiness which he continually spurns and passes by; and this belief in some ulterior happiness exactly fits him. He does not require to stop and taste it; he can be about the rugged and bitter business where his heart lies; and yet he can tell himself this fairy tale of an eternal tea-party, and enjoy the notion that he is both himself and something else; and that his friends will yet meet him, all ironed out and emasculate, and still be lovable,—as if love did not live in the faults of the beloved only, and draw its breath in an unbroken round of forgiveness! But the truth is, we must fight until we die; and when we die there can be no quiet for mankind but complete resumption into—what?—

God, let us say—when all these desperate tricks will lie spellbound at last.

Here came my dinner and cut this sermon short—*excusez*.

R. L. S.

To James Payn

The late Mrs. Buckle, a daughter of Mr. James Payn, married to the editor of the *Times*, had laughingly remonstrated, through her father, on recognising some features of her own house in Queen Square, Bloomsbury, in the description of that tenanted by the fair Cuban in the section of Stevenson's *Dynamiter* which tells the story of the Brown Box.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 2nd, 1886

Dear James Payn,—Your very kind letter came very welcome; and still more welcome the news that you see ——'s tale. I will now tell you (and it was very good and very wise of me not to tell it before) that he is one of the most unlucky men I know, having put all his money into a pharmacy at Hyères, when the cholera (certainly not his fault) swept away his customers in a body. Thus you can imagine the pleasure I have to announce to him a spark of hope, for he sits to-day in his pharmacy, doing nothing and taking nothing, and watching his debts inexorably mount up.

To pass to other matters: your hand, you are perhaps aware, is not one of those that can be read running; and the name of your daughter remains for me undecipherable. I call her, then, your daughter—and a very good name too—and I beg to explain how it came about that I took her house. The hospital was a point in my tale; but there is a house on each side. Now the true house is the one before the hospital: is that No. 11? If not, what do you complain of? If it is, how can I help what is true? Everything in the *Dynamiter* is not true; but the story of the Brown Box is, in almost every particular; I lay my hand on my heart and swear to it. It took place in that house in 1884; and if your daughter was in that house at the time, all I can say is she must have kept very bad society.

But I see you coming. Perhaps your daughter's house has not a balcony at the back? I cannot answer for that; I only know that side of Queen Square from the pavement and the back windows of Brunswick Row. Thence I saw plenty of balconies (terraces rather); and if there is none to the particular house in question, it must have been so arranged to spite me.

I now come to the conclusion of this matter. I address three questions to your daughter:—

1st. Has her house the proper terrace?
2nd. Is it on the proper side of the hospital?
3rd. Was she there in the summer of 1884?

You see, I begin to fear that Mrs. Desborough may have deceived me on some trifling points, for she is not a lady of peddling exactitude. If this should prove to be so, I will give your daughter a proper certificate, and her house property will return to its original value.

Can man say more?—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

I saw the other day that the Eternal had plagiarised from *Lost Sir Massingberd:* good again, sir! I wish he would plagiarise the death of Zero.

To W. H. Low

The late Sir Percy and Lady Shelley had in these days attached themselves warmly to R. L. S., and saw in his ways and character a living image of those of the poet, Sir Percy's father, as they imagined him.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth,
Jan. Somethingorother-th, 1886

MY DEAR LOW,—I send you two photographs: they are both done by Sir Percy Shelley, the poet's son, which may interest. The sitting down one is, I think, the best; but if they choose that, see that the little reflected light on the nose does not give me a turn-up; that would be tragic. Don't forget "Baronet" to Sir Percy's name.

We all think a heap of your book ; and I am well pleased with my dedication.—Yours ever.

R. L. STEVENSON.

P.S.—À propos of the odd controversy about Shelley's nose : I have before me four photographs of myself, done by Shelley's son : my nose is hooked, not like the eagle, indeed, but like the accipitrine family in man ; well, out of these four, only one marks the bend, one makes it straight, and one suggests a turn-up. This throws a flood of light on calumnious man—and the scandalmongering sun. For personally I cling to my curve. To continue the Shelley controversy : I have a look of him, all his sisters had noses like mine : Sir Percy has a marked hook ; all the family had high cheek-bones like mine ; what doubt, then, but that this turn-up (of which Jeaffreson accuses the poet, along with much other *fatras*) is the result of some accident similar to what has happened in my photographs by his son ?

R. L. S.

To CHARLES J. GUTHRIE

" The lad " is Lloyd Osbourne, at this time a student at Edinburgh University. " Omond " is Mr. George William Thomas Omond, advocate and author.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Jan. 18th, 1886

MY DEAR GUTHRIE,—I hear the lad has got into the Spec. and I write to thank you very warmly for the part you have played. I only wish we were both going there together to-morrow night, and you would be in the secretary's place (that so well became you, sir) and I were to open a debate or harry you on " Private Business," and Omond perhaps to read us a few glowing pages on—the siege of Saragossa, was it ? or the Battle of Saratoga ? my memory fails me, but I have not forgotten a certain white charger that careered over the fields of incoherent fight with a prodigious consequence of laughter : have you ? I wonder, has Omond ?

Well, well, *perierunt*, but, I hope, *non imputantur*. We have had good fun.

Again thanking you sincerely, I remain, my dear Guthrie, your old comrade,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

Kidnapped had at this time just been taken up again, and Stevenson explains the course of the story to his father, who had taken the deepest interest in it since they visited together the scene of the Appin murder.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January* 25, 1886]

MY DEAR FATHER,—Many thanks for a letter quite like yourself. I quite agree with you, and had already planned a scene of religion in *Balfour ;* the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge furnishes me with a catechist whom I shall try to make the man. I have another catechist, the blind, pistol-carrying highway robber, whom I have transferred from the Long Island to Mull. I find it a most picturesque period, and wonder Scott let it escape. The *Covenant* is lost on one of the Tarrans, and David is cast on Earraid, where (being from inland) he is nearly starved before he finds out the island is tidal ; then he crosses Mull to Torosay, meeting the blind catechist by the way ; then crosses Morven from Kinlochaline to Kingairloch, where he stays the night with the good catechist ; that is where I am ; next day he is to be put ashore in Appin, and be present at Colin Campbell's death. To-day I rest, being a little run down. Strange how liable we are to brain fag in this scooty family ! But as far as I have got, all but the last chapter, I think David is on his feet, and (to my mind) a far better story and far sounder at heart than *Treasure Island*.

I have no earthly news, living entirely in my story, and only coming out of it to play patience. The Shelleys are gone ; the Taylors kinder than can be imagined. The other day, Lady Taylor drove over and called on me ;

she is a delightful old lady, and great fun. I mentioned a story about the Duchess of Wellington which I had heard Sir Henry tell; and though he was very tired, he looked it up and copied it out for me in his own hand.—Your most affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO DAVID A. STEVENSON, C.E.

The cousin to whom this letter is addressed had undertaken to prepare a map illustrating the course of the brig *Covenant* in the tale of *Kidnapped*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*, 1886]

DEAR DAVIE,—On the small map please mark the course of a ship, in red, leaving Queensferry, going North about midway between the Orkneys and Shetlands, passing in near Cape Wrath, through the Minch, near in by Canna, round Coll and Tiree, close round their S. end and the S.W. end of Mull, where, close in by the S. side of Earraid, it is supposed to strike.

On the large map, a red line is to show the wanderings of my hero after his shipwreck. It must be sometimes dotted to show uncertainty; sometimes full. As thus, it begins on Earraid, he crosses at Low Water, and passes along the Ross and across Mull to Torosay: line dotted across Mull. He then goes by water to Kinlochaline and by road to the shore of the Linnhe Loch, just above Gairloch: line full. He passes the Linnhe Loch to the S. corner of Loch Leven: wood of Lettermore on the advance beyond Rudha Bod Buithe—*not* at Rudha Mor: line still full. Thence along the hilltops to Duror: full. Thence up the S. side of the river Duror, and the N. side of the river Creran, and over Ben Maol Chalicum and across the Coe below Meannarclach: dotted. Thence round the *outside of the hilltops* above the Coe and then above Loch Leven to a place above Coalisnacoan: full. Thence along the hills on the S. bank of the river Leven: full till you get near its fountain. Wherefrom the line becomes dotted, and

staggers up to Ben Alder. From Ben Alder full again, across Loch Ericht, and down its East side, and across the head of Loch Rannoch. My hero then takes the hills and turns the head waters of Glen Lyon, Glen Lochay and Glen Dochart; at such obvious points of his itinerary the lines might be full, and between dotted. The line (full again) descends Balquhidder from the top, turns down Strathire, strikes over Uam Var, hits Alan Water above Kippendaire, descends Alan Water to the Forth, along the N. bank of Forth to Stirling Bridge, and *by road* by Alloa, Clackmannan and Culross, till it issues from the map; for I fear we don't reach Limekilns; which we really should have done, for from that point my hero crosses the Firth to Cawiden, and thence to Queensferry. Terminus Malorum.

If room can be found all the places I have named might be named upon the map, except Glen Lyon, Glen Lochay, Glen Dochart, and the Duror and Creran Rivers and Rudha Bod Buithe, and Ben Maol Chalicum and Meannarclach. The improbability of the itinerary is not so great as it appears, for my hero was trying to escape—like all heroes.

My father is pretty well, better than for a long time, and I may say the same of myself. I send a piece of advance with so much of the itinerary rudely shown.

It should be lettered "Sketch of the cruise of the Brig *Covenant*, and the probable course of David Balfour's Wanderings."

By which you will see that both my families have been robbed to give a name.

Your afft. cousin,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Kippen and Balfour should be marked too as they are referred to in the text, & it should have been the Forth & not the Teith (as I falsely directed you) that was marked; but we had incidents, & changed our proposed itinerary.

To Charles Warren Stoddard

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb. 13th, 1886

My dear Stoddard,—I am a dreadful character; but, you see, I have at last taken pen in hand; how long I may hold it, God knows. This is already my sixth letter to-day, and I have many more waiting; my wrist gives me a jog on the subject of scrivener's cramp, which is not encouraging.

I gather you were a little down in the jaw when you wrote your last. I am as usual pretty cheerful, but not very strong. I stay in the house all winter, which is base; but, as you continue to see, the pen goes from time to time, though neither fast enough nor constantly enough to please me.

My wife is at Bath with my father and mother, and the interval of widowery explains my writing. Another person writing for you when you have done work is a great enemy to correspondence. To-day I feel out of health, and shan't work; and hence this so much overdue reply.

I was re-reading some of your *South Sea Idyls* the other day: some of the chapters are very good indeed; some pages as good as they can be.

How does your class get along? If you like to touch on *Otto*, any day in a by-hour, you may tell them—as the author's last dying confession—that it is a strange example of the difficulty of being ideal in an age of realism; that the unpleasant giddy-mindedness, which spoils the book and often gives it a wanton air of unreality and juggling with air-bells, comes from unsteadiness of key; from the too great realism of some chapters and passages—some of which I have now spotted, others I dare say I shall never spot—which disprepares the imagination for the cast of the remainder.

Any story can be made *true* in its own key; any story can be made *false* by the choice of a wrong key of detail or style: *Otto* is made to reel like a drunken—I was going to say man, but let us substitute cipher—by the variations of the key. Have you observed that the famous problem of

realism and idealism is one purely of detail? Have you seen my *Note on Realism* in Cassell's *Magazine of Art*; and *Elements of Style* in the *Contemporary*; and *Romance* and *Humble Apology* in *Longman's?* They are all in your line of business; let me know what you have not seen and I'll send 'em.

I am glad I brought the old house up to you. It was a pleasant old spot, and I remember you there, though still more dearly in your own strange den upon a hill in San Francisco; and one of the most San Francisco-y parts of San Francisco.

Good-bye, my dear fellow, and believe me your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To EDMUND GOSSE

Concerning the payment which Mr. Gosse had procured him from an American magazine for the set of verses addressed to Mr. Low (see above, p. 68).

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Feb.* 17, 1886]

DEAR GOSSE,—Non, c'est honteux! for a set of shambling lines that don't know whether they're trochees or what they are, that you or any of the crafty ones would blush all over if you had so much as thought upon, all by yourselves, in the water-closet. But God knows, I am glad enough of five pounds; and this is almost as honest a way to get it as plain theft, so what should I care?—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To ——

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 25, 1886

MY DEAR SIR,—I am gratified by your letter and wish to answer two points. First, as to a key, I conceive I could not make my allegory better, nay, that I could not fail to weaken it, if I tried. I have said my say as I was best able: others must look for what was meant: the allegorist

is one, the commentator is another; I conceive they are two parts. Second, I would not for the world have you suppose the parodies in *Punch* are dictated by spite, or are taken in ill part. If it were only a little funnier, I should set down the parody of *Jekyll* to one of my own friends, and a great admirer of that particular book. These parodies do good to the books parodied; great good, sometimes; they are kindly meant, and the parodist has usually keenly enjoyed the book of which he sits down to make a fool. Anstey, for instance, I know to be much admired by the same friend to whom I have referred; he has helped Anstey as he has often helped me; yet I believe he has parodied us both. I write at so great length for it is always pleasant to remove a painful impression. What appears spite, both in reviews and parodies, is usually our humble human friend—stupidity. I have written some other slighter things in a more or less allegorical vein; but they have not yet been collected. I am glad you think the book may be useful, and remain truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I remember reading with pleasure *The Harvest of a Quiet Eye*.

TO JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*Spring*, 1886]

MY DEAR SYMONDS,—If we have lost touch, it is (I think) only in a material sense; a question of letters, not hearts. You will find a warm welcome at Skerryvore from both the light-keepers; and, indeed, we never tell ourselves one of our financial fairy tales, but a run to Davos is a prime feature. I am not changeable in friendship; and I think I can promise you you have a pair of trusty well-wishers and friends in Bournemouth: whether they write or not is but a small thing; the flag may not be waved, but it is there.

Jekyll is a dreadful thing, I own; but the only thing I

feel dreadful about is that damned old business of the war in the members. This time it came out; I hope it will stay in, in future.

Raskolnikoff * is easily the greatest book I have read in ten years; I am glad you took to it. Many find it dull: Henry James could not finish it: all I can say is, it nearly finished me. It was like having an illness. James did not care for it because the character of Raskolnikoff was not objective; and at that I divined a great gulf between us, and, on further reflection, the existence of a certain impotence in many minds of to-day, which prevents them from living *in* a book or a character, and keeps them standing afar off, spectators of a puppet show. To such I suppose the book may seem empty in the centre; to the others it is a room, a house of life, into which they themselves enter, and are tortured and purified. The Juge d'Instruction I thought a wonderful, weird, touching, ingenious creation: the drunken father, and Sonia, and the student friend, and the uncircumscribed, protoplasmic humanity of Raskolnikoff, all upon a level that filled me with wonder: the execution also, superb in places. Another has been translated —*Humiliés et Offensés*. It is even more incoherent than *Le Crime et le Châtiment*, but breathes much of the same lovely goodness, and has passages of power. Dostoieffsky is a devil of a swell, to be sure. Have you heard that he became a stout, imperialist conservative? It is interesting to know. To something of that side, the balance leans with me also in view of the incoherency and incapacity of all. The old boyish idea of the march on Paradise being now out of season, and all plans and ideas that I hear debated being built on a superb indifference to the first principles of human character, a helpless desire to acquiesce in anything of which I know the worst assails me. Fundamental errors in human nature of two sorts stand on the skyline of all this modern world of aspirations. First, that it is happiness that men want; and second, that happiness consists of anything but an internal harmony. Men do not want, and I do not think they would accept, happi-

* The name of the hero in Dostoieffsky's *Le Crime et le Châtiment*.

ness; what they live for is rivalry, effort, success—the elements our friends wish to eliminate. And, on the other hand, happiness is a question of morality—or of immorality, there is no difference—and conviction. Gordon was happy in Khartoum, in his worst hours of danger and fatigue; Marat was happy, I suppose, in his ugliest frenzy; Marcus Aurelius was happy in the detested camp; Pepys was pretty happy, and I am pretty happy on the whole, because we both somewhat crowingly accepted a *via media*, both liked to attend to our affairs, and both had some success in managing the same. It is quite an open question whether Pepys and I ought to be happy; on the other hand, there is no doubt that Marat had better be unhappy. He was right (if he said it) that he was *la misère humaine*, cureless misery—unless perhaps by the gallows. Death is a great and gentle solvent; it has never had justice done it, no, not by Whitman. As for those crockery chimney-piece ornaments, the bourgeois (*quorum pars*), and their cowardly dislike of dying and killing, it is merely one symptom of a thousand how utterly they have got out of touch of life. Their dislike of capital punishment and their treatment of their domestic servants are for me the two flaunting emblems of their hollowness.

God knows where I am driving to. But here comes my lunch.

Which interruption, happily for you, seems to have stayed the issue. I have now nothing to say, that had formerly such a pressure of twaddle. Pray don't fail to come this summer. It will be a great disappointment, now it has been spoken of, if you do.—Yours ever,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To F. W. H. MYERS

In reply to a paper of criticisms and questions concerning *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March 1st, 1886

MY DEAR SIR,—I know not how to thank you: this is as handsome as it is clever. With almost every word I agree

—much of it I even knew before—much of it, I must confess, would never have been, if I had been able to do what I like, and lay the thing by for the matter of a year. But the wheels of Byles the Butcher drive exceeding swiftly, and *Jekyll* was conceived, written, re-written, re-re-written, and printed inside ten weeks. Nothing but this white-hot haste would explain the gross error of Hyde's speech at Lanyon's. Your point about the specialised fiend is more subtle, but not less just: I had not seen it.—About the picture, I rather meant that Hyde had brought it himself; and Utterson's hypothesis of the gift (p. 42) an error.—The tidiness of the room, I thought, but I dare say my psychology is here too ingenious to be sound, was due to the dread weariness and horror of the imprisonment. Something has to be done: he would tidy the room. But I dare say it is false.

I shall keep your paper; and if ever my works come to be collected, I will put my back into these suggestions. In the meanwhile, I do truly lack words in which to express my sense of gratitude for the trouble you have taken. The receipt of such a paper is more than a reward for my labours. I have read it with pleasure, and as I say, I hope to use it with profit.—Believe me, your most obliged,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

The following letter relates to a suggestion which Mr. Gilder, as editor of the *Century Magazine*, had already made in the Hyères time nearly three years previously, and had now lately revived, that Stevenson and his friend, Mr. W. H. Low, should make a joint excursion down the Saône and Rhone, the result to be a book written by R. L. S. and illustrated by Mr. Low. Considerations of health caused the plan to be promptly abandoned for the second time.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March*, 1886]

MY DEAR LOW,—This is the most enchanting picture. Now understand my state; I am really an invalid, but of a mysterious order. I might be a *malade imaginaire*, but for

one too tangible symptom, my tendency to bleed from the lungs. If we could go (*1st*) We must have money enough to travel with *leisure and comfort*—especially the first. (*2nd*) You must be prepared for a comrade who would go to bed some part of every day and often stay silent. (*3rd*) You would have to play the part of a thoughtful courier, sparing me fatigue, looking out that my bed was warmed, etc. (*4th*) If you are very nervous, you must recollect a bad hemorrhage is always on the cards, with its concomitants of anxiety and horror for those who are beside me.

Do you blench ? If so, let us say no more about it.

If you are still unafraid, and the money were forthcoming, I believe the trip might do me good, and I feel sure that, working together, we might produce a fine book. The Rhone is the river of Angels. I adore it : have adored it since I was twelve, and first saw it from the train.

Lastly, it would depend on how I keep from now on. I have stood the winter hitherto with some credit, but the dreadful weather still continues, and I cannot holloa till I am through the wood.

Subject to these numerous and gloomy provisos, I embrace the prospect with glorious feelings.

I write this from bed, snow pouring without, and no circumstance of pleasure except your letter. That, however, counts for much. I am glad you liked the doggerel : I have already had a liberal cheque, over which I licked my fingers with a sound conscience. I had not meant to make money by these stumbling feet, but if it comes, it is only too welcome in my handsome but impecunious house.

Let me know soon what is to be expected—as far as it does not hang by that inconstant quantity, my want of health. Remember me to Madame with the best thanks and wishes ; and believe me your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Sidney Colvin

Written just before a visit to London; not, this time, as my guest at the British Museum, but to stay at an hotel in Fitzroy Square with his father, who was fast declining in health.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March,* 1886]

My dear Colvin,—I have been reading the Vth and VIth Aeneid—the latter for the first time—and am overpowered. That is one of the most astonishing pieces of literature, or rather it contains the best, I ever met with. We are all damned small fry, and Virgil is one of the tops of human achievement; I never appreciated this; you should have a certain age to feel this; it is no book for boys, who grind under the lack of enterprise and dash, and pass ignorantly over miracles of performance that leave an old hoary-headed practitioner like me stricken down with admiration. Even as a boy, the Sibyl would have bust me; but I never read the VIth till I began it two days ago; it is all fresh and wonderful; do you envy me? If only I knew any Latin! if you had a decent edition with notes—many notes—I should like well to have it; mine is a damned Didot with not the ghost of a note, type that puts my eyes out, and (I suspect) no very splendid text—but there, the carnal feelings of the man who can't construe are probably parents to the suspicion.

My dear fellow, I would tenfold rather come to the Monument; but my father is an old man, and if I go to town, it shall be (this time) for his pleasure. He has many marks of age, some of childhood; I wish this knighthood business could come off, though even the talk of it has been already something, but the change (to my eyes) is thoroughly begun; and a very beautiful, simple, honourable, high-spirited and childlike (and childish) man is now in process of deserting us piecemeal. *Si quis piorum*—God knows, not that he was pious, but he did his hand's darg or tried to do it; and if not,—well, it is a melancholy business.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Fleeming Jenkin

The first letter showing Stevenson's new interest in the technicalities of music.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, March,* 1886]

My dear Mrs. Jenkin,—I try to tell myself it is good nature, but I know it is vanity that makes me write.

I have drafted the first part of Chapter VI, Fleeming and his friends, his influence on me, his views on religion and literature, his part at the Savile; it should boil down to about ten pages, and I really do think it admirably good. It has so much evoked Fleeming for myself that I found my conscience stirred just as it used to be after a serious talk with him: surely that means it is good? I had to write and tell you, being alone.

I have excellent news of Fanny, who is much better for the change. My father is still very yellow, and very old, and very weak, but yesterday he seemed happier, and smiled, and followed what was said; even laughed, I think. When he came away, he said to me, "Take care of yourself, my dearie," which had a strange sound of childish days, and will not leave my mind.

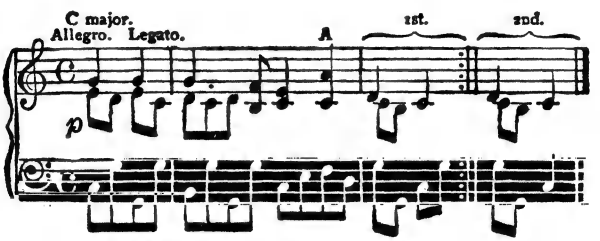
You must get Litolf's *Gavottes Célèbres:* I have made another trover there: a musette of Lully's. The second part of it I have not yet got the hang of; but the first—only a few bars! The gavotte is beautiful and pretty hard, I think, and very much of the period; and at the end of it, this musette enters with the most really thrilling effect of simple beauty. O—it's first-rate. I am quite mad over it. If you find other books containing Lully, Rameau, Martini, please let me know; also you might tell me, you who know Bach, where the easiest is to be found. I write all morning, come down, and never leave the piano till about five; write letters, dine, get down again about eight, and never leave the piano till I go to bed. This is a fine life.—Yours most sincerely,

R. L. S.

If you get the musette (Lully's), please tell me if I am

right, and it was probably written for strings. Anyway, it is as neat as—as neat as Bach—on the piano ; or seems so to my ignorance.

I play much of the Rigadoon ; but it's strange, it don't come off *quite* so well with me !



There is the first part of the musette copied (from memory, so I hope there's nothing wrong). Is it not angelic ? But it ought, of course, to have the gavotte before. The gavotte is in G, and ends on the keynote thus (if I remember) :—

staccato, I think. Then you sail into the musette.

N.B.—Where I have put an " A," is that a dominant eleventh, or what ? or just a seventh on the D ? and if the latter, is that allowed ? It sounds very funny. Never mind all my questions ; if I begin about music (which is my leading ignorance and curiosity), I have always to babble questions : all my friends know me now, and take no notice whatever. The whole piece is marked allegro ; but surely could easily be played too fast ? The dignity must not be lost ; the periwig feeling.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Apr., 1886

My dear People,—We are all on the mend, and mean soon to be quite well. Only I am about as bad in the head as last year, and David hangs on stays. I have been nearly teatotal; one grog at night, and nothing else for four days. At first I thought it was going to do wonders; devil a bit; I am rather worse than before; teatotalism has been overrated, I believe, but doubtless it has its merits all the same. We have lovely, but cold weather, sharp frosts nightly, and the garden is kept in curl papers and looks as if a washing was out.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

Written after his return from an excursion to Matlock with his father, following on their visit to London. "The verses" means *Underwoods*. The suppressed poem is that headed "To ——," afterwards printed in *Songs of Travel*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April*, 1886]

My dear Colvin,—This is to announce to you, what I believe should have been done sooner, that we are at Skerryvore. We were both tired, and I was fighting my second cold, so we came straight through by the west.

We have a butler! He doesn't buttle, but the point of the thing is the style. When Fanny gardens, he stands over her and looks genteel. He opens the door, and I am told waits at table. Well, what's the odds; I shall have it on my tomb—"He ran a butler."

He may have been this and that,
  A drunkard or a guttler;
He may have been bald and fat—
  At least he kept a butler.

He may have sprung from ill or well,
  From Emperor or sutler;
He may be burning now in Hell—
  On earth he kept a butler.

I want to tell you also that I have suppressed your poem.

I shall send it you for yourself, and I hope you will agree with me that it was not good enough in point of view of merit, and a little too intimate as between you and me. I would not say less of you, my friend, but I scarce care to say so much in public while we live. A man may stand on his own head ; it is not fair to set his friend on a pedestal.

The verses are now at press ; I have written a damn fine ballad.—And I am, dear S. C., ever yours,

TOMNODDY.

TO THOMAS STEVENSON

Want of health preventing the author at this time from carrying the adventures of David Balfour, as narrated in *Kidnapped*, through to their issue as originally designed, it was resolved to wind them up for the present with the discomfiture of the wicked uncle, leaving open the possibility of a sequel, which was supplied six years later, in *Catriona*.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April*, 1886]

MY DEAR FATHER,—The David problem has to-day been decided. I am to leave the door open for a sequel if the public take to it, and this will save me from butchering a lot of good material to no purpose. Your letter from Carlisle was pretty like yourself, sir, as I was pleased to see ; the hand of Jekyll, not the hand of Hyde. I am for action quite unfit, and even a letter is beyond me ; so pray take these scraps at a vast deal more than their intrinsic worth. I am in great spirits about David, Colvin agreeing with Henley, Fanny, and myself in thinking it far the most human of my labours hitherto. As to whether the long-eared British public may take to it, all think it more than doubtful ; I wish they would, for I could do a second volume with ease and pleasure, and Colvin thinks it sin and folly to throw away David and Alan Breck upon so small a field as this one.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Matlock, April, 1886

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I must honestly say the place does not agree with me ; I do not feel up to work and to-day I

can do absolutely nothing. How this should influence your plans I do not know; my father, I am sorry to say, gave me a full dose of Hyde this morning. He began about breakfast as usual; and then to prove himself in the right and that he did well to be angry, carried on a long time (obviously on purpose) about the moon. I was very severe with him, and refused to speak again till he was quiet; after which he admitted he had been silly; and yet when I, to let him down gently, took the thing humorously, he began to start it again. He is certainly hard to manage. I half thought he was looking worse; but I have applied to several people, who do not think so. This water cure is a rude amusement of a truth; I do not think he is strong enough to carry it to the extreme.

I believe the journey to Bonn would be very likely a good change for him. I am quite puzzled, however, and I confess with shame, a little out of spirits. But my father has one form of attack, that of accusing me of being down myself, for which I have found no answer, as it instantly justifies itself and sends me down to zero. I must say I am full of admiration for your courage and spirit. There is no objection to your coming, I think, from the point of view of his obedience, as he is quite under Charles's thumb. But what with my work which will not go, and the weather (or if not the weather, then the climate) which does not at all suit me, and (I suppose) the responsibility with my father, I have a somewhat blue view of Smedley, his abode, and wonder how you will stand it. If you come to-morrow, the brandy is nearly out. I suppose I am gloomy to-day because I could not sleep last night, and the dose of Hyde at breakfast finished me (Jekyll has been in the ascendant till now); but besides that, I begin to feel doubtfully about this whole hydropathic business; and I should like you to see him. He has only taken one glass of wine a day; but to-day I mean he shall have two. My poor bad Bogue* hangs, too, on my mind. How nice about Jowett's invitation! I wonder if Sam couldn't be asked too.—Your affectionate son,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

* One of the pet names of his Skye terrier.

To Miss Monroe

The next is in answer to criticisms on *Prince Otto* received from a lady correspondent in Chicago.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, May 25*th*, 1886

Dear Miss Monroe,—(I hope I have this rightly) I must lose no time in thanking you for a letter singularly pleasant to receive. It may interest you to know that I read to the signature without suspecting my correspondent was a woman; though in one point (a reference to the Countess) I might have found a hint of the truth. You are not pleased with Otto; since I judge you do not like weakness; and no more do I. And yet I have more than tolerance for Otto, whose faults are the faults of weakness, but never of ignoble weakness, and who seeks before all to be both kind and just. Seeks, not succeeds. But what is man? So much of cynicism to recognise that nobody does right is the best equipment for those who do not wish to be cynics in good earnest. Think better of Otto, if my plea can influence you; and this I mean for your own sake—not his, poor fellow, as he will never learn your opinion; but for yours, because, as men go in this world (and women too), you will not go far wrong if you light upon so fine a fellow; and to light upon one and not perceive his merits is a calamity. In the flesh, of course, I mean; in the book the fault, of course, is with my stumbling pen. Seraphina made a mistake about her Otto; it begins to swim before me dimly that you may have some traits of Seraphina?

With true ingratitude you see me pitch upon your exception; but it is easier to defend oneself gracefully than to acknowledge praise. I am truly glad that you should like my books; for I think I see from what you write that you are a reader worth convincing. Your name, if I have properly deciphered it, suggests that you may be also something of my countrywoman; for it is hard to see where Monroe came from, if not from Scotland. I seem to have here a double claim on your good nature: being myself pure Scotch and having appreciated your letter, make

up two undeniable merits which, perhaps, if it should be quite without trouble, you might reward with your photograph.—Yours truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MISS MONROE

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June,* 1886]

MY DEAR MISS MONROE,—I am ill in bed and stupid, incoherently stupid; yet I have to answer your letter, and if the answer is incomprehensible you must forgive me. You say my letter caused you pleasure; I am sure, as it fell out, not near so much as yours has brought to me. The interest taken in an author is fragile: his next book, or your next year of culture, might see the interest frosted or outgrown; and himself, in spite of all, you might probably find the most distasteful person upon earth. My case is different. I have bad health, am often condemned to silence for days together—was so once for six weeks, so that my voice was awful to hear when I first used it, like the whisper of a shadow—have outlived all my chief pleasures, which were active and adventurous, and ran in the open air; and being a person who prefers life to art, and who knows it is a far finer thing to be in love, or to risk a danger, than to paint the finest picture or write the noblest book, I begin to regard what remains to me of my life as very shadowy. From a variety of reasons, I am ashamed to confess I was much in this humour when your letter came. I had a good many troubles; was regretting a high average of sins; had been recently reminded that I had outlived some friends, and wondering if I had not outlived some friendships; and had just, while boasting of better health, been struck down again by my haunting enemy, an enemy who was exciting at first, but has now, by the iteration of his strokes, become merely annoying and inexpressibly irksome. Can you fancy that to a person drawing towards the elderly this sort of conjunction of

circumstances brings a rather aching sense of the past and the future? Well, it was just then that your letter and your photograph were brought to me in bed; and there came to me at once the most agreeable sense of triumph. My books were still young; my words had their good health and could go about the world and make themselves welcome; and even (in a shadowy and distant sense) make something in the nature of friends for the sheer hulk that stays at home and bites his pen over the manuscripts. It amused me very much to remember that I had been in Chicago, not so many years ago, in my proper person; where I had failed to awaken much remark, except from the ticket collector; and to think how much more gallant and persuasive were the fellows that I now send instead of me, and how these are welcome in that quarter to the sitter of Herr Platz, while their author was not very welcome even in the villainous restaurant where he tried to eat a meal and rather failed.

And this leads me directly to a confession. The photograph which shall accompany this is not chosen as the most like, but the best-looking. Put yourself in my place, and you will call this pardonable. Even as it is, even putting forth a flattered presentment, I am a little pained; and very glad it is a photograph and not myself that has to go; for in this case, if it please you, you can tell yourself it is my image—and if it displease you, you can lay the blame on the photographer; but in that, there were no hope, and the poor author might belie his labours.

Kidnapped should soon appear; I am afraid you may not like it, as it is very unlike *Prince Otto* in every way; but I am myself a great admirer of the two chief characters, Alan and David. *Virginibus Puerisque* has never been issued in the States. I do not think it is a book that has much charm for publishers in any land; but I am to bring out a new edition in England shortly, a copy of which I must try to remember to send you. I say try to remember, because I have some superficial acquaintance with myself: and I have determined, after a galling discipline, to promise nothing more until the day of my death: at least, in this

way, I shall no more break my word, and I must now try being churlish instead of being false.

I do not believe you to be the least like Seraphina. Your photograph has no trace of her, which somewhat relieves me, as I am a good deal afraid of Seraphinas—they do not always go into the woods and see the sunrise, and some are so well-mailed that even that experience would leave them unaffected and unsoftened. The " hair and eyes of several complexions " was a trait taken from myself ; and I do not bind myself to the opinions of Sir John. In this case, perhaps—but no, if the peculiarity is shared by two such pleasant persons as you and I (as you and me—the grammatical nut is hard), it must be a very good thing indeed, and Sir John must be an ass.

The Book Reader notice was a strange jumble of fact and fancy. I wish you could have seen my father's old assistant and present partner when he heard my father described as an " inspector of lighthouses," for we are all very proud of the family achievements, and the name of my house here in Bournemouth is stolen from one of the sea-towers of the Hebrides which are our pyramids and monuments. I was never at Cambridge, again ; but neglected a considerable succession of classes at Edinburgh. But to correct that friendly blunderer were to write an autobiography.—And so now, with many thanks, believe me yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Evidently written about the 10th of June, very soon after the decision of Mr. Gladstone to dissolve Parliament on the defeat of the Home Rule Bill (June 8). As to the *Travelling Companion*, see above, vol. xxxii. (vol. ii. of *Letters*), p. 278.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, June*, 1886]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am in bed again—bloodie jackery and be damned to it. Lloyd is better, I think ; and money matters better ; only my rascal carcase, and the muddy and oily lees of what was once my immortal soul, are in a poor and pitiful condition.

LITANY

Damn the political situation
" you
" me
and
" Gladstone.

I am a kind of dam home ruler, worse luck to it. I would support almost anything but that bill. How am I to vote? Great Cæsar's Ghost!—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

O! the *Travelling Companion* won't do; I am back on it entirely: it is a foul, gross, bitter, ugly daub, with lots of stuff in it, and no urbanity and no glee and no true tragedy —to the crows with it, a carrion tale! I will do no more carrion, I have done too much in this carrion epoch; I will now be clean; and by clean, I don't mean any folly about purity, but such things as a healthy man with his bowels open shall find fit to see and speak about without a pang of nausea.—I am, yours,

A Repentant Dankist.

The lakeists, the drainists, the brookists, and the riverites; let me be a brookist, *faute de mieux*.

I did enjoy myself in town, and was a thousandfold the better of it.

To Alison Cunningham

Accompanying a presentation copy of *Kidnapped*. Alison Cunningham's maiden name had been Hastie.

[*Bournemouth, July*, 1886]

My dear Cummy,—Herewith goes my new book, in which you will find some places that you know: I hope you will like it: I do. The name of the girl at Limekilns (as will appear if the sequel is ever written) was Hastie, and I

conceive she was an ancestor of yours: as David was no doubt some kind of relative of mine.

I have no time for more, but send my love, and remembrance to your brother.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

During these months, as already indicated, Stevenson was very much taken up, in by-hours, with trying to learn something of the theory and practice of music, and spent much of his time "pickling," as he called it, in an elementary manner on the piano. He even tried his hand in an experimental way at composition, and had sent one of his attempts for criticism to his cousin, Mr. R. A. M. Stevenson, who was better versed in the art.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July, 1886

Sir,—Your foolish letter was unduly received. There may be hidden fifths, and if there are, it shows how dam spontaneous the thing was. I could tinker and tic-tac-toe on a piece of paper, but scorned the act with a Threnody, which was poured forth like blood and water on the groaning organ. If your heart (which was what I addressed) remained unmoved, let us refer to the affair no more: crystallised emotion, the statement and the reconciliation of the sorrows of the race and the individual, is obviously no more to you than supping sawdust. Well, well. If ever I write another Threnody! My next op. will probably be a Passepied and fugue in G (or D).

The mind is in my case shrunk to the size and sp. gr. of an aged Spanish filbert. O, I am so jolly silly. I now pickle with some freedom (1) the refrain of *Martini's Moutons;* (2) *Sul margine d'un rio*, arranged for the infant school by the Aged Statesman; (3) the first phrase of Bach's musette (Sweet Englishwoman,* No. 3), the rest of the musette being one prolonged cropper, which I take daily for the benefit of my health. All my other works (of which there are many) are either arranged (by R. L.

* *Suite anglaise.*

Stevenson) for the manly and melodious forefinger, or else prolonged and melancholy croppers. . . . I find one can get a notion of music very nicely. I have been pickling deeply in the Magic Flute; and have arranged *La dove prende*, almost to the end, for two melodious forefingers. I am next going to score the really nobler *Colomba o tortorella* for the same instruments.

This day is published
The works of Ludwig van Beethoven
arranged
and wiederdurchgearbeiteted
for two melodious forefingers
by,
Sir,—Your obedient servant,
PIMPERLY STIPPLE.

That's a good idea? There's a person called Lenz who actually does it—beware his den; I lost eighteen pennies on him, and found the bleeding corpses of pieces of music divorced from their keys, despoiled of their graces, and even changed in time; I do not wish to regard music (nor to be regarded) through that bony Lenz. You say you are "a spoon-fed idiot"; but how about Lenz? And how about me, sir, me?

I yesterday sent Lloyd by parcel post, at great expense, an empty matchbox and empty cigarette-paper book, a bell from a cat's collar, an iron kitchen spoon, and a piece of coal more than half the superficies of this sheet of paper. They are now (appropriately enough) speeding towards the Silly Isles; I hope he will find them useful. By that, and my telegram with prepaid answer to yourself, you may judge of my spiritual state. The finances have much brightened; and if *Kidnapped* keeps on as it has begun, I may be solvent.—Yours,

THRENODIÆ AVCTOR.
(The author of ane Threnodie)

Op. 2: Scherzo (in G Major) expressive of the Sense of favours to come.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Skerryvore [*Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

Dear Bob,—Herewith another shy; more melancholy than before, but I think not so abjectly idiotic. The musical terms seem to be as good as in Beethoven, and that, after all, is the great affair. Bar the damn bareness of the bass, it looks like a piece of real music from a distance. I am proud to say it was not made one hand at a time; the bass was of synchronous birth with the treble; they are of the same age, sir, and may God have mercy on their souls! —Yours,

The Maestro.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Mr. and Mrs. T. Stevenson had been thinking of trying a winter at Bournemouth for the sake of being near their son, a plan which was eventually carried out. The health of the former was now fast and painfully breaking. Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, had been down at Skerryvore with an introduction from Mr. Gosse, and had made a drawing of Stevenson's head.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July 7th, 1886

My dear People,—It is probably my fault, and not yours, that I did not understand. I think it would be well worth trying the winter in Bournemouth; but I would only take the house by the month—this after mature discussion. My leakage still pursues its course; if I were only well, I have a notion to go north and get in (if I could) at the inn at Kirkmichael, which has always smiled upon me much. If I did well there, we might then meet and do what should most smile at the time.

Meanwhile, of course, I must not move, and am in a rancid box here, feeling the heat a great deal, and pretty tired of things. Alexander did a good thing of me at last; it looks like a mixture of an aztec idol, a lion, an Indian Rajah, and a woman; and certainly represents a mighty

comic figure. F. and Lloyd both think it is the best thing that has been done of me up to now.

You should hear Lloyd on the penny whistle, and me on the piano! Dear powers, what a concerto! I now live entirely for the piano, he for the whistle; the neighbours, in a radius of a furlong and a half, are packing up in quest of brighter climes.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

P.S.—Please say if you can afford to let us have money for the trip, and if so, how much. I can see the year through without help, I believe, and supposing my health to keep up; but can scarce make this change on my own metal.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

Dear Charles,—Doubtless, if all goes well, towards the 1st of August we shall be begging at your door. Thanks for a sight of the papers, which I return (you see) at once, fearing further responsibility.

Glad you like Dauvit; but eh, man, yon's terrible strange conduc' o' thon man Rankeillor. Ca' him a legal adviser! It would make a bonny law-shuit, the Shaws case; and yon paper they signed, I'm thinking, wouldnae be muckle thought o' by Puggy Deas.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

[*Presumably from Bournemouth,* 1886]

My dear Fellow,—*Send the thing to Jones and answer our questions.* Less reflection, more compliance, and your affairs will march more swiftly. It is not for you, but Jones, to understand it. I am very sorry about the money. Dreadful weather here; how is it with you? I trust you

are better again. I am all at sea in my poor wits. I do not understand anything.—Ever your respected papa,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

" Hecky " was a dog belonging to his correspondent's brother. Stevenson was always interested by his own retentiveness of memory for childish things, and here asks Cummy some questions to test the quality of hers.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July,* 1886]

My dear Cummy,—I was sorry to get so poor account of you and Hecky. Fanny thinks perhaps it might be Hecky's teeth. Sir Walter Simpson has a very clever vet. I have forgotten his name ; but if you like, I send a card and you or James might ask the address.

Now to what is more important. Do you remember any of the following names : Lady Boothroyd, Barny Gee, Andrew Silex, the steward, Carus Rearn, Peter Mangles, Richard Markham, Fiddler Dick ? Please let me know and I will tell you how I come to ask. I warn you, you will have to cast back your eyes a good long way, close upon thirty years, before you strike the trail on which I wish to lead you.

When I have had an answer I will write you a decent letter. To-day, though nothing much is wrong with me, I am out of sorts and most disinclined for writing.—Yours most affectionately,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Written during one of his short stays as my guest at the British Museum. I remember his being invited to stay at Balliol by the Master and declining for fear of falling ill there, and

should guess (I have not seen the letter) that " backed " is a misreading for some word meaning shirked or refused.

British Museum, June, 1886

DEAR FOLKS (Dear Young Folks),—Have seen le Henley, who seems depressed but proposes to come down next week. Have written and backed the Jowett business once and for all, and think I did right, so you need not worry how you are to get to Oxford, for you are not going. Colvin wants me to stay on till Monday. If I felt very well on Friday, and as if I was gaining ground, I should perhaps stay on if there was no objection in Skerryvore: Let me hear on this point. I am just getting over the journey, having slept practically all yesterday, and been but half awake to-day, with a headache in the morning, now happily departed. It was the headache made me shirk Chatto, to whom I go to-morrow without fail. My dearest people, I send you my love.

R. L. S.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*], *July* 6, 1886

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I have not sent you any " advice " because I could find none to offer. We are all in a puddle ourselves; I have a beastly leaking which will not stop at any price, and as soon as it stops, I am under orders to go away, and can by no means fancy where. I once half thought of coming to Scotland; indeed, it may end that way; but I should have to be better, or it would be worse both for my father and myself. I was terribly annoyed by this backslip just when I was feeling so well.

Mr. Alexander, a very pleasant, simple fellow and a first rate draughtsman, is here doing my portrait for the *Century Mag.* He has done a splendid head of Lloyd; mine as yet is not so successful; and Fanny's (also tried) is quite a failure. To-day he is ill and cannot work. I wonder if my father would sit to him; he knocks off these charcoal

sketches in one or two hours, when he is in trim; the masterful head of Lloyd took about twenty minutes; and he is going to Edinburgh. If my father would sit, I believe we should have a chance of a really good thing.

I have nothing else to say, being grumpy and vague, and in a tiff with fate about this continual leaking. It is not bright, when it comes up, but there is a fair amount and it shows no sign of stopping. Weather very hot. Thermo. 104 yesterday in the sun, 87 in the shade: this with a smart breeze. The evenings are delightful. We are now a mighty musical household; I am learning to read music pretty fast; and Lloyd is just now ear-aching heaven with the penny whistle; an excellent thing, which keeps him well employed and in good spirits. I propose to get him a clarionet some day, and let him go at that; it will be more decent in result.

Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Thomas Stevenson

"Coolin," mentioned below, had been a favourite Skye terrier of Heriot Row days.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *July* 28, 1886

My dear Father,—We have decided not to come to Scotland, but just to do as Dobell wished, and take an outing. I believe this is wiser in all ways; but I own it is a disappointment. I am weary of England; like Alan, "I weary for the heather," if not for the deer. Lloyd has gone to Scilly with Katharine and C., where and with whom he should have a good time. *David* seems really to be going to succeed, which is a pleasant prospect on all sides. I am, I believe, floated financially; a book that sells will be a pleasant novelty. I enclose another review; mighty complimentary, and calculated to sell the book too.

Coolin's tombstone has been got out, honest man! and it is to be polished, for it has got scratched, and have a touch of gilding in the letters, and be sunk in the front of

the house. Worthy man, he, too, will maybe weary for the heather, and the bents of Gullane, where (as I dare say you remember) he gaed clean gyte, and jumped on to his crown from a gig, in hot and hopeless chase of many thousand rabbits. I can still hear the little cries of the honest fellow as he disappeared ; and my mother will correct me, but I believe it was two days before he turned up again at North Berwick : to judge by his belly, he had caught not one out of these thousands, but he had had some exercise.

I keep well.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Anticipating the gift of a cupboard and answering the questions set in his last. The date of the readings had been his seventh year. Mr. Galpin was a partner in Cassell, Petter, Galpin, & Co.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, July or August,* 1886]

My dear Cummy,—The cupboard has not yet turned up, and I was hanging on to be able to say it had. However, that is only a trick to escape another letter, and I should despise myself if I kept it up. It was truly kind of you, dear Cummy, to send it to us : and I will let you know where we set it and how it looks.

Carus Rearn and Andrew Silex and the others were from a story you read me in Cassell's *Family Paper*, and which I have been reading again and found by no means a bad story. Mr. Galpin lent me all the old volumes, and I mean to re-read *Custaloga* also, but have not yet. It was strangely like old times to read the other ; don't you remember the poisoning with mushrooms ? That was Andrew Silex.—Yours most affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Having given up going to Scotland for a summer change, Stevenson had started on the " outing " which he mentions in the

last letter. It took the shape of a ten days' visit to my house at the British Museum, followed by another made in the company of Mr. Henley to Paris, chiefly for the sake of seeing the W. H. Lows and the sculptor Rodin.

British Museum [*August* 10*th*, 1886]

MY DEAR MOTHER,—We are having a capital holiday, and I am much better, and enjoying myself to the nines. Richmond is painting my portrait. To-day I lunch with him, and meet Burne-Jones; to-night Browning dines with us. That sounds rather lofty work, does it not? His path was paved with celebrities. To-morrow we leave for Paris, and next week, I suppose, or the week after, come home. Address here, as we may not reach Paris. I am really very well.—Ever your affectionate son,

R. L. S.

TO T. WATTS-DUNTON

Written after his return from London and Paris.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*September*, 1886]

DEAR MR. WATTS,—The sight of the last *Athenæum* reminds me of you, and of my debt, now too long due. I wish to thank you for your notice of *Kidnapped;* and that not because it was kind, though for that also I valued it, but in the same sense as I have thanked you before now for a hundred articles on a hundred different writers. A critic like you is one who fights the good fight, contending with stupidity, and I would fain hope not all in vain; in my own case, for instance, surely not in vain.

What you say of the two parts in *Kidnapped* was felt by no one more painfully than by myself. I began it partly as a lark, partly as a pot-boiler; and suddenly it moved, David and Alan stepped out from the canvas, and I found I was in another world. But there was the cursed beginning, and a cursed end must be appended; and our old friend Byles the butcher was plainly audible tapping at the back door. So it had to go into the world, one part (as it does seem to me) alive, one part merely galvanised: no work,

only an essay. For a man of tentative method, and weak health, and a scarcity of private means, and not too much of that frugality which is the artist's proper virtue, the days of sinecures and patrons look very golden: the days of professional literature very hard. Yet I do not so far deceive myself as to think I should change my character by changing my epoch; the sum of virtue in our books is in a relation of equality to the sum of virtues in ourselves; and my *Kidnapped* was doomed, while still in the womb and while I was yet in the cradle, to be the thing it is.

And now to the more genial business of defence. You attack my fight on board the *Covenant*: I think it literal. David and Alan had every advantage on their side—position, arms, training, a good conscience; a handful of merchant sailors, not well led in the first attack, not led at all in the second, could only by an accident have taken the round-house by attack; and since the defenders had firearms and food, it is even doubtful if they could have been starved out. The only doubtful point with me is whether the seamen would have ever ventured on the second onslaught; I half believe they would not; still the illusion of numbers and the authority of Hoseason would perhaps stretch far enough to justify the extremity.—I am, dear Mr. Watts, your very sincere admirer,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO ALISON CUNNINGHAM

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

MY DEAR CUMMY,—I am home from a long holiday, vastly better in health. My wife not home yet, as she is being cured in some rather boisterous fashion by some Swedish doctors. I hope it may do her good, as the process seems not to be agreeable in itself.

Your cupboard has come, and it is most beautiful: it is certainly worth a lot of money, and is just what we have been looking for in all the shops for quite a while: so your present falls very pat. It is to go in our bedroom I think;

but perhaps my wife will think it too much of a good thing to be put so much out of the way, so I shall not put it in its place till her return. I am so well that I am afraid to speak of it, being a coward as to boasting. I take walks in the wood daily, and have got back to my work after a long break. The story I wrote you about was one you read to me in Cassell's *Family Paper* long ago when it came out. It was astonishing how clearly I remembered it all, pictures, characters, and incidents, though the last were a little mixed and I had not the least the hang of the story. It was very pleasant to read it again, and remember old days, and the weekly excursion to Mrs. Hoggs after that precious journal. Dear me, lang syne now! God bless you, dear Cummy.—Your afft. boy,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Mr. Locker-Lampson (known before his second marriage as Frederick Locker), the friend of Tennyson and most accomplished writer of *vers de société* in his time, had through their common friend Mr. Andrew Lang asked Stevenson for a set of verses, and he had sent the following—which were first printed, I believe, at the head of a very scarce volume:—"*Rowfant Rhymes*, by Frederick Locker, with an introduction by Austin Dobson. Cleveland, The Rowfant Club, 1895. 127 copies only printed."

Skerryvore, September 4, 1886

NOT roses to the rose, I trow,
The thistle sends, nor to the bee
Do wasps bring honey. Wherefore now
Should Locker ask a verse from me?

Martial, perchance,—but he is dead,
And Herrick now must rhyme no more;
Still burning with the muse, they tread
(And arm in arm) the shadowy shore.

They, if they lived, with dainty hand,
To music as of mountain brooks,
Might bring you worthy words to stand
Unshamed, dear Locker, in your books.

But tho' these fathers of your race
Be gone before, yourself a sire,
To-day you see before your face
Your stalwart youngsters touch the lyre.

On these—on Lang or Dobson—call,
Long leaders of the songful feast.
They lend a verse your laughing fall—
A verse they owe you at the least.

To Frederick Locker-Lampson

To Mr. Locker-Lampson's acknowledgment of these verses Stevenson replied as follows, asking his correspondent's interest on behalf of a friend who had been kind to him at Hyères, in procuring a nomination for her son to the Blue-Coat School.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

Dear Locker,—You take my verses too kindly, but you will admit, for such a bluebottle of a versifier to enter the house of Gertrude, where her necklace hangs, was not a little brave. Your kind invitation, I fear, must remain unaccepted; and yet—if I am very well—perhaps next spring—(for I mean to be very well)—my wife might. . . . But all that is in the clouds with my better health. And now look here: you are a rich man and know many people, therefore perhaps some of the Governors of Christ's Hospital. If you do, I know a most deserving case, in which I would (if I could) do anything. To approach you, in this way, is not decent; and you may therefore judge by my doing it, how near this matter lies to my heart. I enclose you a list of the Governors which I beg you to return, whether or not you shall be able to do anything to help me.

The boy's name is ——; he and his mother are very poor. It may interest you in her cause if I tell you this: that when I was dangerously ill at Hyères, this brave lady, who had then a sick husband of her own (since dead) and a house to keep and a family of four to cook for, all with

her own hands, for they could afford no servant, yet took watch-about with my wife, and contributed not only to my comfort, but to my recovery in a degree that I am not able to limit. You can conceive how much I suffer from my impotence to help her, and indeed I have already shown myself a thankless friend. Let not my cry go up before you in vain !—Yours in hope,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Mr. Locker-Lampson, apparently misunderstanding the application, had replied with a cheque.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, September, 1886

MY DEAR LOCKER,—That I should call myself a man of letters, and land myself in such unfathomable ambiguities ! No, my dear Locker, I did not want a cheque ; and in my ignorance of business, which is greater even than my ignorance of literature, I have taken the liberty of drawing a pen through the document and returning it ; should this be against the laws of God or man, forgive me. All that I meant by my excessively disgusting reference to your material well-being was the vague notion that a man who is well off was sure to know a Governor of Christ's Hospital ; though how I quite arrived at this conclusion I do not see. A man with a cold in the head does not necessarily know a rat-catcher ; and the connection is equally close—as it now appears to my awakened and somewhat humbled spirit. For all that, let me thank you in the warmest manner for your friendly readiness to contribute. You say you have hopes of becoming a miser : I wish I had ; but indeed I believe you deceive yourself, and are as far from it as ever. I wish I had any excuse to keep your cheque, for it is much more elegant to receive than to return ; but I have my way of making it up to you, and I do sincerely beg you to write to the two Governors. This extraordinary outpouring of correspondence would (if you knew my habits) convince you of my great eagerness in this matter.

I would promise gratitude ; but I have made a promise to myself to make no more promises to anybody else, having broken such a host already, and come near breaking my heart in consequence ; and as for gratitude, I am by nature a thankless dog, and was spoiled from a child up. But if you can help this lady in the matter of the Hospital, you will have helped the worthy. Let me continue to hope that I shall make out my visit in the spring, and believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

It may amuse you to know that a very long while ago, I broke my heart to try to imitate your verses, and failed hopelessly. I saw some of the evidences the other day among my papers, and blushed to the heels.

R. L. S.

I give up finding out your name in the meantime, and keep to that by which you will be known—Frederick Locker.

TO FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *24th September*, 1886

MY DEAR LOCKER,—You are simply an angel of light, and your two letters have gone to the post ; I trust they will reach the hearts of the recipients—at least, that could not be more handsomely expressed. About the cheque : well now, I am going to keep it ; but I assure you Mrs. —— has never asked me for money, and I would not dare to offer any till she did. For all that I shall stick to the cheque now, and act to that amount as your almoner. In this way I reward myself for the ambiguity of my epistolary style.

I suppose, if you please, you may say your verses are thin (would you so describe an arrow, by the way, and one that struck the gold ? It scarce strikes me as exhaustively descriptive), and, thin or not, they are (and I have found them) inimitably elegant. I thank you again very sincerely

for the generous trouble you have taken in this matter which was so near my heart, and you may be very certain it will be the fault of my health and not my inclination, if I do not see you before very long, for all that has past has made me in more than the official sense sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO AUGUSTE RODIN

Written after another visit to me in London, in November, which had been cut short by fogs. "Le Printemps" is Rodin's group so called.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth,
November or December, 1886

MON CHER AMI,—Il y a bien longtemps déjà que je vous dois des lettres par dizaines; mais bien que je vais mieux, je ne vais toujours que doucement. Il a fallu faire le voyage à Bournemouth comme une fuite en Égypte, par crainte des brouillards qui me tuaient; et j'en ressentais beaucoup de fatigue. Mais mainteant celà commence à aller, et je puis vous donner de mes nouvelles.

Le Printemps est arrivé, mais il avait le bras cassé, et nous l'avons laissé, lors de notre fuite, aux soins d'un médecin-de-statues. Je l'attends de jour en jour; et ma maisonette en resplendira bientôt. Je regrette beaucoup le dédicace; peut-être, quand vous viendrez nous voir, ne serait-il pas trop tard de l'ajouter? Je n'en sais rien, je l'espère. L'œuvre c'est pour tout le monde; le dédicace est pour moi. L'œuvre est un cadeau trop beau même; c'est le mot d'amitié qui me le donne pour de bon. Je suis si bête que je m'embrouille, et me perds; mais vous me comprendrez, je pense.

Je ne puis même pas m'exprimer en Anglais; comment voudriez vous que je le pourrais en Français? Plus heureux que vous, le Némésis des arts ne me visite pas sous le masque du désenchantement; elle me suce l'intelligence et me laisse bayer aux corneilles, sans capacité mais sans regret; sans éspérance, c'est vrai, mais aussi, Dieu

merci, sans désespoir. Un doux étonnement me tient ; je ne m'habitue pas à me trouver si buche, mais je m'y résigne ; même si celà durait, ce ne serait pas désagréable—mais comme je mourrais certainement de faim, ce serait tout au moins regrettable pour moi et ma famille.

Je voudrais pouvoir vous écrire ; mais ce n'est pas moi qui tiens la plume—c'est l'autre, le bête celui qui ne connaît pas le Français, celui qui n'aime pas mes amis comme je les aime, qui ne goûte pas aux choses de l'art comme j'y goûte ; celui que je renie, mais auquel je commande toujours assez pour le faire prendre la plume en main et écrire des tristes bavardages. Celui-là, mon cher Rodin, vous ne l'aimez pas ; vous ne devez jamais le connaître. Votre ami, qui dort à present comme un ours au plus profond de mon être, se réveillera sous peu. Alors, il vous écrira de sa propre main. Attendez lui. L'autre ne compte pas ; ce n'est qu'un secretaire infidèle et triste, à l'âme gelée, à la tête de bois.

Celui qui dort est toujours, mon cher ami, bien à vous ; celui qui écrit est chargé de vous en faire part et de signer de la raison sociale.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON ET TRIPLE-BRUTE.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following refers first, if I remember right, to some steps that were being taken to obtain recognition in the form of a knighthood for the elder Stevenson's public services ; next, to the writer's own work at the time in hand ; and lastly to my volume on Keats then in preparation for the *English Men of Letters* series.

Skerryvore, Dec. 14, 1886

MY DEAR COLVIN,—This is first-rate of you, the Lord love you for it ! I am truly much obliged. He—my father—is very changeable ; at times, he seems only a slow quiet edition of himself ; again, he will be very heavy and blank ; but never so violent as last spring ; and therefore, to my mind, better on the whole.

Fanny is pretty peepy ; I am splendid. I have been

writing much verse—quite the bard, in fact; and also a dam tale to order, which will be what it will be: I don't love it, but some of it is passable in its mouldy way, *The Misadventures of John Nicholson.* All my bardly exercises are in Scotch; I have struck my somewhat ponderous guitar in that tongue to no small extent: with what success, I know not, but I think it's better than my English verse; more marrow and fatness, and more ruggedness.

How goes *Keats?* Pray remark, if he (Keats) hung back from Shelley, it was not to be wondered at, *when so many of his friends were Shelley's pensioners.* I forget if you have made this point; it has been borne in upon me reading Dowden and the *Shelley Papers;* and it will do no harm if you have made it. I finished a poem to-day, and writ 3,000 words of a story, *tant bien que mal;* and have a right to be sleepy, and (what is far nobler and rarer) am so.—My dear Colvin, ever yours,

THE REAL MACKAY.

TO LADY TAYLOR

Stevenson's volume of tales, *The Merry Men,* so called from the story which heads the collection, was about to appear with a dedication to Lady Taylor. Professor Dowden's *Shelley* had lately come out, and had naturally been read with eager interest in a circle where Sir Percy (the poet's son) and Lady Shelley were intimate friends and neighbours.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth [*New Year,* 1887]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—This is to wish you all the salutations of the year, with some regret that I cannot offer them in person; yet less than I had supposed. For hitherto your flight to London seems to have worked well; and time flies and will soon bring you back again. Though time is ironical, too; and it would be like his irony if the same tide that brought you back carried me away. That would not be, at least, without some meeting.

I feel very sorry to think the book to which I have put

your name will be no better, and I can make it no better. The tales are of all dates and places ; they are like the box, the goose, and the cottage of the ferryman ; and must go floating down time together as best they can. But I am after all a (superior) penny-a-liner ; I must do, in the Scotch phrase, as it will do with me ; and I cannot always choose what my books are to be, only seize the chance they offer to link my name to a friend's. I hope the lot of them (the tales) will look fairly disciplined when they are clapped in binding ; but I fear they will be but an awkward squad. I have a mild wish that you at least would read them no further than the dedication.

I suppose we have all been reading Dowden. It seems to me a really first-rate book, full of justice, and humour without which there can be no justice ; and of fine intelligence besides. Here and there, perhaps a trifle precious, but this is to spy flaws in a fine work. I was weary at my resemblances to Shelley ; I seem but a Shelley with less oil, and no genius ; though I have had the fortune to live longer and (partly) to grow up. He was growing up. There is a manlier note in the last days ; in spite of such really sickening aberrations as the Emillia Viviani business. I try to take a humorously-genial view of life ; but Emillia Viviani, if I have her detested name aright,* is too much for my philosophy. I cannot smile when I see all these grown folk waltzing and piping the eye about an insubordinate and perfectly abominable schoolgirl, as silly and patently as false as Blanche Amory.† I really think it is one of those episodes that make the angels weep.

With all kind regards and affectionate good wishes to and for you and yours, believe me, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

* As in fact he had, all except the double l.
† In *Pendennis*.

To Lady Taylor

The reference in the last paragraph to a " vision " cannot be explained, his correspondent's daughters retaining no memory on the subject.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January*, 1887]

My dear Lady Taylor,—I don't know but what I agree fairly well with all you say, only I like *The Merry Men*, as a fantasia or vision of the sea, better than you do. The trouble with *Olalla* is that it somehow sounds false; and I think it must be this that gives you the feeling of irreverence. Of *Thrawn Janet*, which I like very much myself, you say nothing, thus uttering volumes; but it is plain that people cannot always agree. I do not think it is a wholesome part of me that broods on the evil in the world and man; but I do not think that I get harm from it; possibly my readers may, which is more serious; but at any account, I do not purpose to write more in this vein. But the odd problem is: what makes a story true? *Markheim* is true; *Olalla* false; and I don't know why, nor did I feel it while I worked at them; indeed I had more inspiration with *Olalla*, as the style shows. I am glad you thought that young Spanish woman well dressed; I admire the style of it myself, more than is perhaps good for me; it is so solidly written. And that again brings back (almost with the voice of despair) my unanswerable: why is it false?

Here is a great deal about my works. I am in bed again; and my wife but so-so; and we have no news recently from Lloyd: and the cat is well; and we see, or I see, no one; so that other matters are all closed against me.

Your vision is strange indeed; but I see not how to use it; I fear I am earthly enough myself to regard it as a case of disease, but certainly it is a thrilling case to hear of.—Ever affectionately yours,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Henry James

This letter is written on the front page of a set of proofs of *Memories and Portraits*. The "silly Xmas story" is *The Misadventures of John Nicholson;* the "volume of verse" appeared later in the year as *Underwoods*. The signature refers to the two Scots poets of whom, "in his native speech," he considered himself the follower.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, January, 1887

All the salutations!

My dear James,—I send you the first sheets of the new volume, all that has yet reached me, the rest shall follow in course. I am really a very fair sort of a fellow all things considered, have done some work; a silly Xmas story (with some larks in it) which won't be out till I don't know when. I am also considering a volume of verse, much of which will be cast in my native speech, that very dark oracular medium: I suppose this is a folly, but what then? As the nurse says in Marryat, "It was only a little one."

My wife is peepy and dowie: two Scotch expressions with which I will leave you to wrestle unaided, as a preparation for my poetical works. She is a woman (as you know) not without art: the art of extracting the gloom of the eclipse from sunshine; and she has recently laboured in this field not without success or (as we used to say) not without a blessing. It is strange: "we fell out my wife and I" the other night; she tackled me savagely for being a canary-bird; replied (bleatingly) protesting that there was no use in turning life into King Lear; presently it was discovered that there were two dead combatants upon the field, each slain by an arrow of the truth, and we tenderly carried off each other's corpses. Here is a little comedy for Henry James to write! the beauty was each thought the other quite unscathed at first. But we had dealt shrewd stabs.

You say nothing of yourself, which I shall take to be good news. Archer's note has gone. He is, in truth, a very clever fellow that Archer, and I believe a good one. It is a pleasant thing to see a man who can use a pen; he can:

really says what he means, and says it with a manner; comes into print like one at his ease, not shamefaced and wrong-foot-foremost like the bulk of us. Well, here is luck, and here are the kindest recollections from the canary-bird and from King Lear, from the Tragic Woman and the Flimsy Man.

ROBERT RAMSAY FERGUSSON STEVENSON.

TO FREDERICK LOCKER-LAMPSON

Stevenson suffered more even than usual after the turn of the year and during the spring of 1887, and for several months his correspondence almost entirely fails. This is in reply to an invitation to Rowfant for Easter.

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February 5th, 1887

MY DEAR LOCKER,—Here I am in my bed as usual, and it is indeed a long while since I went out to dinner. You do not know what a crazy fellow this is. My winter has not so far been luckily passed, and all hope of paying visits at Easter has vanished for twelve calendar months. But because I am a beastly and indurated invalid, I am not dead to human feelings; and I neither have forgotten you nor will forget you. Some day the wind may round to the right quarter and we may meet; till then I am still truly yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO HENRY JAMES

The volume of tales here mentioned is *The Merry Men;* that of essays, *Memories and Portraits;* that of verse, *Underwoods.*

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February,* 1887]

MY DEAR JAMES,—My health has played me it in once more in the absurdest fashion, and the creature who now addresses you is but a stringy and white-faced *bouilli* out

of the pot of fever, with the devil to pay in every corner of his economy. I suppose (to judge by your letter) I need not send you these sheets, which came during my collapse by the rush. I am on the start with three volumes, that one of tales, a second one of essays, and one of—ahem—verse. This is a great order, is it not? After that I shall have empty lockers. All new work stands still; I was getting on well with *Jenkin* when this blessed malady unhorsed me, and sent me back to the dung-collecting trade of the re-publisher. I shall re-issue *Virg. Puer.* as vol. I. of *Essays*, and the new vol. as vol. II. of ditto; to be sold, however, separately. This is but a dry maundering; however, I am quite unfit—"I am for action quite unfit Either of exercise or wit." My father is in a variable state; many sorrows and perplexities environ the house of Stevenson; my mother shoots north at this hour on business of a distinctly rancid character; my father (under my wife's tutorage) proceeds to-morrow to Salisbury; I remain here in my bed and whistle; in no quarter of heaven is anything encouraging apparent, except that the good Colvin comes to the hotel here on a visit. This dreary view of life is somewhat blackened by the fact that my head aches, which I always regard as a liberty on the part of the powers that be. This is also my first letter since my recovery. God speed your laudatory pen!

My wife joins in all warm messages.—Yours,

R. L. S.

To Auguste Rodin

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, February, 1887

Mon cher Ami,—Je vous néglige, et cependant ce n'est véritablement pas de ma faute. J'ai fait encore une maladie; et je puis dire que je l'ai royalement bien faite. Que celà vous aide à me pardonner. Certes je ne vous oublie pas; et je puis dire que je ne vous oublierai jamais. Si je n'écris pas, dîtes que je suis malade—c'est trop souvent

vrai, dîtes que je suis las d'écrivailler—ce sera toujours vrai ; mais ne dîtes pas, et ne pensez pas, que je deviens indifférent. J'ai devant moi votre portrait tiré d'un journal anglais (et encadré à mes frais), et je le regarde avec amitié, je le regarde même avec une certaine complaisance—dirai-je, de faux aloi ? comme un certificat de jeunesse. Je me croyais trop vieux—au moins trop quarante-ans—pour faire de nouveaux amis ; et quand je regarde votre portrait, et quand je pense au plaisir de vous revoir, je sens que je m'étais trompé. Écrivez-moi donc un petit mot, pour me dire que vous ne gardez pas rancune de mon silence, et que vous comptez bientôt venir en Angleterre. Si vous tardez beaucoup, ce sera moi qui irai vous relancer.—Bien à vous, mon cher ami,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To W. H. Low

Mr. Low and his wife, who were at this time leaving Paris for good, had been meditating a visit to the Stevensons at Bournemouth on their way home to the United States.

[*April*, 1887]

MY DEAR LOW,—The fares to London may be found in any continental Bradshaw or sich ; from London to Bournemouth impoverished parties who can stoop to the third class get their ticket for the matter of 10s., or, as my wife loves to phrase it, " a half a pound." You will also be involved in a 3s. fare to get to Skerryvore ; but this, I dare say, friends could help you in on your arrival ; so that you may reserve your energies for the two tickets—costing the matter of a pound—and the usual gratuities to porters. This does not seem to me much : considering the intellectual pleasures that await you here, I call it dirt cheap. I *believe* the third class from Paris to London (*via* Dover) is *about* forty francs, but I cannot swear. Suppose it to be fifty.

	frcs.
50 × 2 = 100	100
The expense of spirit or spontaneous lapse of coin on the journey, at 5 frcs. a head, 5 × 2 = 10 .	10
Victuals on ditto, at 5 frcs. a head, 5 × 2 = 10 . .	10
Gratuity to stewardess, in case of severe prostration, at 3 francs	3
One night in London, on a modest footing, say 20 .	20
Two tickets to Bournemouth at 12·50, 12·50 × 2 = 25	25
Porters and general devilment, say 5 . . .	5
Cabs in London, say 2 shillings, and in Bournemouth, 3 shillings = 5 shillings, 6 frcs. 25 . . .	6·25
frcs. . .	179·25

Or, the same in pounds, £7, 3s. 6½d.
Or, the same in dollars, $35.45,

if there be any arithmetical virtue in me. I have left out dinner in London in case you want to blow out, which would come extry, and with the aid of *vangs fangs* might easily double the whole amount—above all if you have a few friends to meet you.

In making this valuable project, or budget, I discovered for the first time a reason (frequently overlooked) for the singular costliness of travelling with your wife. Anybody would count the tickets double ; but how few would have remembered—or indeed has any one ever remembered ?—to count the spontaneous lapse of coin double also ? Yet there are two of you, each must do his daily leakage, and it must be done out of your travelling fund. You will tell me, perhaps, that you carry the coin yourself : my dear sir, do you think you can fool your Maker ? Your wife has to lose her quota ; and by God she will—if you kept the coin in a belt. One thing I have omitted : you will lose a certain amount on the exchange, but this even I cannot foresee, as it is one of the few things that vary with the way a man has.—I am, dear sir, yours financially,

SAMUEL BUDGETT.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

I had lately sent him two books, the fifth volume of Huxley's *Collected Essays* and Cotter Morison's *Service of Man ;* the latter a

work of Positivist tendency, on which its genial and accomplished author had long built strong hopes, but which unfortunately he only began to write after a rapid decline of health and power had set in.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, Spring*, 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I read Huxley, and a lot of it with great interest. Eh, what a gulf between a man with a mind like Huxley and a man like Cotter Morison. Truly 'tis the book of a boy; before I was twenty I was done with all these considerations. Nor is there one happy phrase, except " the devastating flood of children." Why should he din our ears with languid repetitions of the very first ideas and facts that a bright lad gets hold of; and how can a man be so destitute of historical perspective, so full of cheap outworn generalisations—feudal ages, time of suffering—*pas tant qu'aujourdhui*, M. Cotter! Christianity —which? what? how? You must not attack all forms, from Calvin to St. Thomas, from St. Thomas to (One who should surely be considered) Jesus Christ, with the same missiles: they do not all tell against all. But there it is, as we said; a man joins a sect, and becomes one-eyed. He affects a horror of vices which are just the thing to stop his " devastating flood of babies," and just the thing above all to keep the vicious from procreating. Where, then, is the ground of this horror in any intelligent Servant of Humanity? O, beware of creeds and anti-creeds, sects and anti-sects. There is but one truth, outside science, the truth that comes of an earnest, smiling survey of mankind " from China to Peru," or further, and from to-day to the days of Probably Arboreal; and the truth (however true it is) that robs you of sympathy with any form of thought or trait of man, is false for you, and heretical, and heretico-plastic. Hear Morison struggling with his chains; hear me, hear all of us, when we suffer our creeds or anti-creeds to degenerate towards the whine, and begin to hate our neighbours, or our ancestors, like ourselves. And yet in Morison, too, as in St. Thomas, as in Rutherford, ay, or in Peden, truth struggles, or it would not so deform them. The man has not a devil; it is an angel that

tears and blinds him. But Morison's is an old, almost a venerable seraph, with whom I dealt before I was twenty, and had done with before I was twenty-five.

Behold how the voices of dead preachers speak hollowly (and lengthily) within me !—Yours ever—and rather better —not much,

R. L. S.

To Garrett Droppers

One day, as Professor Droppers was walking from the lecture room at Harvard with William James, there arose the question of the philosophical importance of Stevenson, who had, Professor Droppers said, " brought back the sense of adventure into life."

Professor James replied : " There is no critical estimate of Stevenson's influence that I know of. Why not write something on this ? " As a result, there appeared in the *Harvard Monthly* for March, 1887, an estimate of the place and influence of Stevenson. Professor Droppers sent a copy of the article to Stevenson, together with a letter recounting an incident which happened in a Boston street car. Professor James had purchased an English edition of *Prince Otto,* and, on being chidden by Professor Droppers for his extravagance in not buying the cheaper American pirated edition, said : " Well, ordinarily when buying books I don't mind stealing, but I thought I wouldn't steal from Stevenson."

Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April 5, 1887

Dear Mr. Droppers,—I should find it difficult to exaggerate the gratification I have received from your letter and article. The article is the work, I take it, of a young man ; and I may discount something of its warmth upon that score. But I must say frankly, if you think too well of me, as I suppose you do, it is in the way of exaggerating my success, not of misunderstanding my aim and point of view. To you, at least, I seem to have conveyed my meaning ; it is a pleasure to me to find myself understood, it will be a pleasure to you to hear that you have understood me.

Let me say one word about science. Had I lived in an age that was averse from science, I should have preached it in season and out of season. I came at a time when science was made much of, and had arrogated to itself a supremacy over all other branches of knowledge, and so I fell consistently foul of it. For all that, I would have no

one neglect science; I read a lot of it myself and profited in a thousand ways. The great thing is to know as much science as your mind will stand without turning into a man of science (a common professor), just as it is to know as much of the world as your heart will bear without your turning into a man of the world. In all these things there is an easy rule, which I believe infallible. As long as any study continues to add, pursue it; as soon as it begins to subtract, have done with it. We want to round out our globe of experience and sympathy on all sides; not to contract into the cube.

I preach away very glibly, because I am fond of preaching; but I am keenly aware that you are already, in all probability, better read and will soon, I daresay, be a better preacher than I. When that is so, you will not forget the pleasure I was able to give you, and the help you found, if you found any, in my books. It pleases me to hope that you did; and indeed there is a sense in which I am pleased with myself—for I have never been a writer for cowards, male or female, in the flesh. You see you have made me a little vain; yours is the fault. I was a *very* young man myself and I wish to address young men; so that a young man's—and a clever young man's—approval, took my approval, took my vanity in the softest point.

I was pleased to hear what you told me of the professor; national sins bind us with iron; I cannot help keeping an opium house as large as China (though indeed I am a sleeping partner) and some day I shall pay for it. It is difficult for Americans to avoid buying pirated books; but some day they will pay for that too. In the meantime it is I who pay for it; and what concerns me not a little, my very honest American publishers, the Messrs. Scribner. But I am quite aware of the Chinese beam in my eye, and lament the mote in my brother's decorously.

Let me hear of you again, or, if you come to Europe, let me see you.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—It is all in my own hand. I had to change my

hand on a threatening of the scrivener's palsy, and the signature (for reasons not unconnected with the bank) remains a solitary specimen of the original.

R. L. S.

To Alison Cunningham

Skerryvore, April 16th, 1887

My dearest Cummy,—As usual, I have been a dreary bad fellow and not written for ages; but you must just try to forgive me, to believe (what is the truth) that the number of my letters is no measure of the number of times I think of you, and to remember how much writing I have to do. The weather is bright, but still cold; and my father, I'm afraid, feels it sharply. He has had—still has, rather—a most obstinate jaundice, which has reduced him cruelly in strength, and really upset him altogether. I hope, or think, he is perhaps a little better; but he suffers much, cannot sleep at night, and gives John and my mother a severe life of it to wait upon him. My wife is, I think, a little better, but no great shakes. I keep mightily respectable myself.

Coolin's Tombstone is now built into the front wall of Skerryvore, and poor Bogie's (with a Latin inscription also) is set just above it. Poor, unhappy wee man, he died, as you must have heard, in fight, which was what he would have chosen; for military glory was more in his line than the domestic virtues. I believe this is about all my news, except that, as I write, there is a blackbird singing in our garden trees, as it were at Swanston. I would like fine to go up the burnside a bit, and sit by the pool and be young again—or no, be what I am still, only there instead of here, for just a little. Did you see that I had written about John Todd? In this month's *Longman* it was; if you have not seen it, I will try and send it you. Some day climb as high as Halkerside for me (I am never likely to do it for myself), and sprinkle some of the well water on the turf. I am afraid it is a pagan rite, but quite harmless, and *ye can*

sain it wi' a bit prayer. Tell the Peewies that I mind their forbears well. My heart is sometimes heavy and sometimes glad to mind it all. But for what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful. Don't forget to sprinkle the water, and do it in my name ; I feel a childish eagerness in this.

Remember me most kindly to James, and with all sorts of love to yourself, believe me, your laddie,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—I suppose Mrs. Todd ought to see the paper about her man ; judge of that, and if you think she would not dislike it, buy her one from me, and let me know. The article is called *Pastoral*, in *Longman's Magazine* for April. I will send you the money ; I would to-day, but it's the Sabbie day, and I cannae.

R. L. S.

Remembrances from all here.

TO MRS. FLEEMING JENKIN

The following sets forth the *pros* and *cons* which were balancing each other in his mind in regard to his scheme of going to make a stand in his own person against agrarian outrage in Ireland.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *April 15 or 16 (the hour not being known)*, 1887

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—It is I know not what hour of the night ; but I cannot sleep, have lit the gas, and here goes.

First, all your packet arrived : I have dipped into the Schumann already with great pleasure. Surely, in what concerns us there is a sweet little chirrup ; the *Good Words* arrived in the morning just when I needed it, and the famous notes that I had lost were recovered also in the nick of time.

And now I am going to bother you with my affairs : premising, first, that this is *private ;* second, that whatever I do the *Life* shall be done first, and I am getting on with it

well ; and third, that I do not quite know why I consult you, but something tells me you will hear with fairness.

Here is my problem. The Curtin women are still miserable prisoners ; no one dare buy their farm of them, all the manhood of England and the world stands aghast before a threat of murder. (1) Now, my work can be done anywhere ; hence I can take up without loss a back-going Irish farm, and live on, though not (as I had originally written) in it : First Reason. (2) If I should be killed, there are a good many who would feel it : writers are so much in the public eye, that a writer being murdered would attract attention, throw a bull's-eye light upon this cowardly business : Second Reason. (3) I am not unknown in the States, from which the funds come that pay for these brutalities : to some faint extent my death (if I should be killed) would tell there : Third Reason. (4) *Nobody else is taking up this obvious and crying duty :* Fourth Reason. (5) I have a crazy health and may die at any moment, my life is of no purchase in an insurance office, it is the less account to husband it, and the business of husbanding a life is dreary and demoralising : Fifth Reason.

I state these in no order, but as they occur to me. And I shall do the like with the objections.

First Objection : It will do no good ; you have seen Gordon die, and nobody minded ; nobody will mind if you die. This is plainly of the devil. Second Objection : You will not even be murdered, the climate will miserably kill you, you will strangle out in a rotten damp heat, in congestion, etc. Well, what then ? It changes nothing : the purpose is to brave crime ; let me brave it, for such time and to such an extent as God allows. Third Objection : The Curtin women are probably highly uninteresting females. I haven't a doubt of it. But the Government cannot, men will not, protect them. If I am the only one to see this public duty, it is to the public and the Right I should perform it—not to Mesdames Curtin. Fourth Objection : I am married. " I have married a wife ! " I seem to have heard it before. It smells ancient ! what was the context ? Fifth Objection : My wife has had a

mean life (1), loves me (2), could not bear to lose me (3). (1) I admit : I am sorry. (2) But what does she love me for ? and (3) she must lose me soon or late. And after all, because we run this risk, it does not follow we should fail. Sixth Objection : My wife wouldn't like it. No, she wouldn't. Who would ? But the Curtins don't like it. And all those who are to suffer if this goes on, won't like it. And if there is a great wrong, somebody must suffer. Seventh Objection : I won't like it. No, I will not ; I have thought it through, and I will not. But what of that ? And both she and I may like it more than we suppose. We shall lose friends, all comforts, all society : so has everybody who has ever done anything ; but we shall have some excitement, and that's a fine thing ; and we shall be trying to do the right, and that's not to be despised. Eighth Objection : I am an author with my work before me. See Second Reason. Ninth Objection : But am I not taken with the hope of excitement ? I was at first. I am not much now. I see what a dreary, friendless, miserable, God-forgotten business it will be. And anyway, is not excitement the proper reward of doing anything both right and a little dangerous ? Tenth Objection : But am I not taken with a notion of glory ? I daresay I am. Yet I see quite clearly how all points to nothing coming, to a quite inglorious death by disease and from the lack of attendance ; or even if I should be knocked on the head, as these poor Irish promise, how little any one will care. It will be a smile at a thousand breakfast-tables. I am nearly forty now ; I have not many illusions. And if I had ? I do not love this health-tending, housekeeping life of mine. I have a taste for danger, which is human, like the fear of it. Here is a fair cause ; a just cause ; no knight ever set lance in rest for a juster. Yet it needs not the strength I have not, only the passive courage that I hope I could muster, and the watchfulness that I am sure I could learn.

Here is a long midnight dissertation ; with myself ; with you. Please let me hear. But I charge you this : if you see in this idea of mine the finger of duty, do not

dissuade me. I am nearing forty, I begin to love my ease and my home and my habits, I never knew how much till this arose; do not falsely counsel me to put my head under the bed-clothes. And I will say this to you: my wife, who hates the idea, does not refuse. "It is nonsense," says she, "but if you go, I will go." Poor girl, and her home and her garden that she was so proud of! I feel her garden most of all, because it is a pleasure (I suppose) that I do not feel myself to share.

1. Here is a great wrong.
2. ,, a growing wrong.
3. ,, a wrong founded on crime.
4. ,, crime that the Government cannot prevent.
5. Here is crime that it occurs to no man to defy.
6. But it has occurred to me.
7. Being a known person, some will notice my defiance.
8. Being a writer, I can *make* people notice it.
9. And, I think, *make* people imitate me.
10. Which would destroy in time this whole scaffolding of oppression.
11. And if I fail, however ignominiously, that is not my concern. It is, with an odd mixture of reverence and humorous remembrances of Dickens, be it said—it is A-nother's.

And here, at I cannot think what hour of the morning, I shall dry up, and remain—Yours, really in want of a little help.

R. L. S.

Sleepless at midnight's dewy hour.
,, ,, witching ,,
,, ,, maudlin ,,
etc.

Next morning.—Eleventh Objection: I have a father and mother. And who has not? Macduff's was a rare case; if we must wait for a Macduff. Besides, my father will not perhaps be long here. Twelfth Objection: The

cause of England in Ireland is not worth supporting. *À qui le dîtes-vous?* And I am not supporting that. Home Rule, if you like. Cause of decency, the idea that populations should not be taught to gain public ends by private crime, the idea that for all men to bow before a threat of crime is to loosen and degrade beyond redemption the whole fabric of man's decency.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

This and the next letter to his wife I have no means of dating accurately. They were written during a short absence of Mrs. Stevenson's in London. Stevenson had begun to work on the life of his friend Fleeming Jenkin, whose widow had been to Bournemouth that he might consult her concerning the task.

[*Bournemouth*, 1887]

My dear Fellow,—I am very well. Let Lloyd get his writing thing; I will send a cheque. My father and mother came here to-day; he very yellow and not very well, she bad with neuralgia. I was all afternoon at the piano. When you return I shall be able to play a Bach musette, kind of decently, and to hammer out the rigadoon of Rameau's. I never played so like a human being as to-day; I entranced myself—don't know how it might have struck a stranger. I cannot send you the letters to-day as they are not answered. Shall to-morrow. Nothing about Doctors. Mrs. Jenkin left this morning, saying her mind was at peace about the *Life*. I go on. I wonder Colvin doesn't tell me his news. Why nothing about Doctors? You promised to let me know. Heavens, what a fine time I had at the piano: four hours I believe; tell Gatchie, I really get a kind of notion of deciphering. If I live ten years, I might master it, but I have come to the conclusion that I should never look forward or backward now; having come to a fine plateau of life. I kind of slightly miss you at this moment; the first sign, upon my soul—I have been so busy with letters and *Jenkin* and the seraphic spurt at the piano.—Ever your

Louis.

TO MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

I cannot remember about the picture of this beau : probably Beau Brummel, the historical prototype of Beau Austin in Stevenson's and Henley's play. "Ginger" is a pet cat so named by reason of his colour.

[*Bournemouth*, 1887]

MY DEAR OLD GIRL,—Thanks for your kind and interesting letter and the lovely picture of the beau. I have kept my orders strictly ; in bed at ten sharp, if not before. I am quite well, except for acidity, which instead of decreasing, grows upon me : if an alkali was suddenly applied I should go off like a squib. I am put on a very dreary diet of meat, bread, and brandy and water, and drain the flowing alkaline draught at intervals, and never without alarm. Scott says, if this doesn't start me all right in a week, he will pack me to London. This seems a pity : I spoke of Bath, but he said at this season he could not let me take any other change except to town. I hope it won't be necessary. The German translators are worked off. Yesterday there were nine letters sent off ; to-day this is already my fifth, but I take you earlier in the list as you have deserved well of your country.

The writing table came, and is lovely, but I am sorry to say one of the keys does not fit, which leaves us in a state of painful curiosity : Valentine who was in a high state of excitement before I saw it (it came while I was abed) had pitched on one particular lockfast as the home of the secreted dollar or last will : I did the same : and we can't open it, which is abominable.

When do you return ? Colvin comes Tuesday. Henley, Wednesday. I have had my days alone after all ; and the result is that my conscience begins to be at peace. I should have three a month at least. But even an easy conscience is but a small thing to one dipped in acid : and I am a mere vinegar bottle. Ginger * is very kind to me ; he was out last night in the rain, came in soaked, wished to lie in my bosom, and quarrelled with me sharply because

* The cat.

I regimbed. I hope you keep pretty good. I send you my love and am your acetic patient

LOUIS.

TO MRS. FLEEMING JENKIN

The first paragraph of the following refers to the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*: the second, to a remark of his correspondent that a task such as he had proposed to himself in Ireland should be undertaken by a society rather than an individual.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth, April,* 1887]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—The Book. It is all drafted: I hope soon to send you for comments Chapters III., IV., and V. Chapter VII. is roughly but satisfactorily drafted: a very little work should put that to rights. But Chapter VI. is no joke; it is a *mare magnum*: I swim and drown and come up again; and it is all broken ends and mystification: moreover, I perceive I am in want of more matter. I must have, first of all, a little letter from Mr. Ewing about the phonograph work: *If* you think he would understand it is quite a matter of chance whether I use a word or a fact out of it. If you think he would not: I will go without. Also, could I have a look at Ewing's *précis?* And lastly, I perceive I must interview you again about a few points; they are very few, and might come to little; and I propose to go on getting things as well together as I can in the meanwhile, and rather have a final time when all is ready and only to be criticised. I do still think it will be good. I wonder if Trélat would let me cut? But no, I think I wouldn't after all; 'tis so quaint and pretty and clever and simple and French, and gives such a good sight of Fleeming: the plum of the book, I think.

You misunderstood me in one point: I always hoped to found such a society; that was the outside of my dream, and would mean entire success. *But*—I cannot play Peter the Hermit. In these days of the Fleet Street journalist, I cannot send out better men than myself, with wives or

mothers just as good as mine, and sisters (I may at least say) better, to a danger and a long-drawn dreariness that I do not share. My wife says it's cowardice; what brave men are the leader-writers! Call it cowardice; it is mine. Mind you, I may end by trying to do it by the pen only: I shall not love myself if I do; and is it ever a good thing to do a thing for which you despise yourself?—even in the doing? And if the thing you do is to call upon others to do the thing you neglect? I have never dared to say what I feel about men's lives, because my own was in the wrong: shall I dare to send them to death? The physician must heal himself: he must honestly *try* the path he recommends: if he does not even try, should he not be silent?

I thank you very heartily for your letter, and for the seriousness you brought to it. You know, I think when a serious thing is your own, you keep a saner man by laughing at it and yourself as you go. So I do not write possibly with all the really somewhat sickened gravity I feel. And indeed, what with the book, and this business to which I referred, and Ireland, I am scarcely in an enviable state. Well, I ought to be glad, after ten years of the worst training on earth—valetudinarianism—that I can still be troubled by a duty. You shall hear more in time; so far, I am at least decided: I will go and see Balfour when I get to London.

We have all had a great pleasure: a Mrs. Rawlinson came and brought with her a nineteen-year-old daughter, simple, human, as beautiful as—herself; I never admired a girl before, you know it was my weakness: we are all three dead in love with her. How nice to be able to do so much good to harassed people by—yourself!—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To Miss Rawlinson

Here follows a compliment in verse to the young lady last mentioned, whose Christian name was May.

[*Sherryvore, Bournemouth, April*, 1887]

Of the many flowers you brought me,
Only some were meant to stay,
And the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the flower that went away.

Of the many flowers you brought me,
All were fair and fresh and gay,
But the flower I thought the sweetest
Was the blossom of the May.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Within a fortnight after the date of the above Stevenson went himself, and for the last time, to Scotland; not, indeed, to visit his old haunts among the Pentlands, but to be present, too late for recognition, at the death of his father (May 8, 1887). Business detained him for some weeks, and the following was written just before his return to Bournemouth.

[*Edinburgh, June*, 1887]

MY DEAR S. C.,—At last I can write a word to you. Your little note in the *P.M.G.* was charming. I have written four pages in the *Contemporary*, which Bunting found room for: they are not very good, but I shall do more for his memory in time.

About the death, I have long hesitated, I was long before I could tell my mind; and now I know it, and can but say that I am glad. If we could have had my father, that would have been a different thing. But to keep that changeling—suffering changeling—any longer, could better none and nothing. Now he rests; it is more significant, it is more like himself. He will begin to return to us in the course of time, as he was and as we loved him.

My favourite words in literature, my favourite scene—"O let him pass," Kent and Lear—was played for me here in the first moment of my return. I believe Shakespeare saw it with his own father. I had no words; but it was shocking to see. He died on his feet, you know: was on

his feet the last day, knowing nobody—still he would be up. This was his constant wish; also that he might smoke a pipe on his last day. The funeral would have pleased him; it was the largest private funeral in man's memory here.

We have no plans, and it is possible we may go home without going through town. I do not know; I have no views yet whatever; nor can have any at this stage of my cold and my business.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

During the two months following his father's death Stevenson had suffered much both from his old complaints and from depression of mind. His only work had been in preparing for press the verse collection *Underwoods*, the *Life of Fleeming Jenkin*, and the volume of essays called *Memories and Portraits*. The opinions quoted are those of physicians.

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *July or August*, 1887

Dear Lad,—I write to inform you that Mr. Stevenson's well-known work, *Virginibus Puerisque*, is about to be reprinted. At the same time a second volume called *Memories and Portraits* will issue from the roaring loom. Its interest will be largely autobiographical, Mr. S. having sketched there the lineaments of many departed friends, and dwelt fondly, and with a m'istened eye, upon by-gone pleasures. The two will be issued under the common title of *Familiar Essays;* but the volumes will be vended separately to those who are mean enough not to hawk at both.

The blood is at last stopped: only yesterday. I began to think I should not get away. However, I hope—I hope—remark the word—no boasting—I hope I may luff up a bit now. Dobell, whom I saw, gave as usual a good account of my lungs, and expressed himself, like his neighbours, hopefully about the trip. He says, my uncle says, Scott says, Brown says—they all say—You ought not to be in such a state of health; you should recover. Well, then, I mean to. My spirits are rising again after three months of black depression: I almost begin to feel as if I should

care to live: I would, by God! And so I believe I shall.—Yours,

BULLETIN M'GURDER.

How has the *Deacon* gone?

To Sir Walter Simpson

Written during Stevenson's last stay with me at the British Museum; in the course of which he had made up his mind to try as a last resource a trip to one of the mountain climates of North America.

British Museum [*July*, 1887]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,—This is a long time I have not acknowledged the *Art of Golf*, though I read it through within thirty-six hours of its arrival. I have been ill and out of heart, and ill again and again ill, till I am weary of it, and glad indeed to try the pitch-farthing hazard of a trip to Colorado or New Mexico. There we go, if I prove fit for the start, on August 20th.

Meanwhile, the *Art of Golf*. A lot of it is very funny, and I liked the fun very well; but what interested me most was the more serious part, because it turns all the while on a branch of psychology that no one has treated and that interests me much: the psychology of athletics. I had every reason to be interested in it, because I am abnormal: I have no memory in athletics. I have forgotten how to ride and how to skate; and I should not be the least surprised if I had forgotten how to swim.

I find I can write no more: it is the first I have tried since I was ill; and I am too weak.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

[*Skerryvore, Bournemouth*] *August 6th*, 1887

MY DEAR LOW,—We—my mother, my wife, my stepson, my maidservant, and myself, five souls—leave, if all is

well, Aug. 20th, per Wilson line s.s. *Ludgate Hill*. Shall probably evade N. Y. at first, cutting straight to a watering-place: Newport, I believe, its name. Afterwards we shall steal incognito into *la bonne ville*, and see no one but you and the Scribners, if it may be so managed. You must understand I have been very seedy indeed, quite a dead body; and unless the voyage does miracles, I shall have to draw it dam fine. Alas, "The Canoe Speaks" is now out of date; it will figure in my volume of verses now imminent. However, I may find some inspiration some day.—Till very soon, yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady to whom the following (and much correspondence yet to come) is addressed had been an attached friend of the Skerryvore household and a pupil of Stevenson's in the art of writing. She had given R. L. S. a paper-cutter by way of farewell token at his starting.

Bournemouth, August 19th, 1887

My dear Miss Boodle,—I promise you the paper-knife shall go to sea with me; and if it were in my disposal, I should promise it should return with me too. All that you say, I thank you for very much; I thank you for all the pleasantness that you have brought about our house; and I hope the day may come when I shall see you again in poor old Skerryvore, now left to the natives of Canada, or to worse barbarians, if such exist. I am afraid my attempt to jest is rather *à contre-cœur*.—Good-bye—*au revoir*—and do not forget your friend,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Messrs. Chatto & Windus

The titles and proofs mentioned in the text are presumably those of *Underwoods* and *Memories and Portraits*.

Bournemouth [*August*, 1887]

Dear Sirs,—I here enclose the two titles. Had you not better send me the bargains to sign? I shall be here

till Saturday; and shall have an address in London (which I shall send you) till Monday, when I shall sail. Even if the proofs do not reach you till Monday morning, you could send a clerk from Fenchurch Street Station at 10:23 A.M. for Galleons Station, and he would find me embarking on board the *Ludgate Hill*, Island Berth, Royal Albert Dock. Pray keep this in case it should be necessary to catch this last chance. I am most anxious to have the proofs with me on the voyage.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

IX

THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

WINTER IN THE ADIRONDACKS

AUGUST, 1887—JUNE, 1888

IX

THE UNITED STATES AGAIN

THE letters printed in the following section are selected from those which tell of Stevenson's voyage to New York and reception there at the beginning of September, 1887; of his winter's life and work at Saranac Lake, and of his decision taken in May, 1888, to venture on a yachting cruise in the South Seas.

The moment of his arrival at New York was that when his reputation had first reached its height in the United States, owing to the popularity both of *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*, but more especially to the immense impression made by the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. He experienced consequently for the first time the pleasures, such as they were, of celebrity, and also its inconveniences; found the most hospitable of refuges in the house of his kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Fairchild, at Newport; and quickly made many other friends, including the late Augustus St. Gaudens, the famous sculptor, with Mr. C. Scribner and Mr. E. L. Burlingame, the owner and the editor of *Scribner's Magazine*, from whom he immediately received and accepted very advantageous offers of work. Having been dissuaded from braving for the present the fatigue of the long journey to Colorado and the extreme rigour of its winter climate, he determined to try instead a season at Saranac Lake in the Adirondack Mountains, New York State, which had lately been coming into reputation as a place of cure. There, under care of the well-known resident physician, Dr. Trudeau, he spent nearly seven months, from the end of September, 1887, to the end of April, 1888, with results on the whole favourable to his

own health, though not to that of his wife, which could never support these winter mountain cures. On the 16th of April, he and his party left Saranac. After spending a fortnight in New York, where, as always in cities, his health quickly flagged again, he went for the month of May into seaside quarters at Union House, Manasquan, on the New Jersey coast, for the sake of fresh air and boating. Here he enjoyed the occasional society of some of his New York friends, including Mr. St. Gaudens and Mr. W. H. Low, and was initiated in the congenial craft of cat-boat sailing. In the meantime, Mrs. Stevenson had gone to San Francisco to see her relatives; and holding that the climate of the Pacific was likely to be better for the projected cruise than that of the Atlantic, had inquired there whether a yacht was to be hired for such a purpose. The schooner *Casco*, Captain Otis, was found. Stevenson signified by telegraph his assent to the arrangement; determined to risk in the adventure the sum of £2000, of which his father's death had put him in possession, hoping to recoup himself by a series of Letters recounting his experiences, for which he had received a commission from Mr. S. S. M'Clure; and on the 2nd of June started with his mother and stepson for San Francisco, the first stage on that island cruise from which he was destined never to return.

His work during the season September, 1887—May, 1888, had consisted of the twelve papers published in the course of 1888 in *Scribner's Magazine* including perhaps the most striking of all his essays, *A Chapter on Dreams*, *Pulvis et Umbra*, *Beggars*, *The Lantern Bearers*, *Random Memories*, etc.; as well as the greater part of the *Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box*—the last originally conceived and drafted by Mr. Lloyd Osbourne.

To Sidney Colvin

A succession of Stevenson's friends had visited and spent part of the day or the evening with him at Armfield's Hotel on Sunday, August 20th, each bringing some farewell gift or another (as related by Mr. Gosse in his volume *Critical Kitcats*, p. 297). Among these, Mr. Henry James's gift had been a case of champagne for consumption during the journey. On the morning of the 21st I accompanied him to the docks, saw him and his party embarked on board the steamer *Ludgate Hill*, a vessel sailing from the port of London and carrying animals and freight as well as passengers. They had chosen to go by this route for the sake alike of economy and amusement, rather than by one of the sumptuous liners sailing from Liverpool or Southampton. Leaving the ship's side as she weighed anchor, and waving farewell to the party from the boat which landed me, I little knew what was the truth, that I was looking on the face of my friend for the last time. The letters next following were written during or immediately after this passage across the Atlantic. "The Commodore" is of course R. L. S. himself.

H.M.S. Vulgarium, *off Havre de Grace, this 22nd day of August* [1887]

Sir,—The weather has been hitherto inimitable. Inimitable is the only word that I can apply to our fellow-voyagers, whom a categorist, possibly premature, has been already led to divide into two classes—the better sort consisting of the baser kind of Bagman, and the worser of undisguised Beasts of the Field. The berths are excellent, the pasture swallowable, the champagne of H. James (to recur to my favourite adjective) inimitable. As for the Commodore, he slept awhile in the evening, tossed off a cup of Henry James with his plain meal, walked the deck till eight, among sands and floating lights and buoys and wrecked brigantines, came down (to his regret) a minute too soon to see Margate lit up, turned in about nine, slept, with some interruptions, but on the whole sweetly, until six, and has already walked a mile or so of deck, among a fleet of other steamers waiting for the tide, within view of Havre, and pleasantly entertained by passing fishing-boats, hovering sea-gulls, and Vulgarians pairing on deck with endearments of primitive simplicity. There, sir, can be viewed the sham quarrel, the sham desire for information,

and every device of these two poor ancient sexes (who might, you might think, have learned in the course of the ages something new) down to the exchange of head-gear.—I am, sir, yours,

BOLD BOB BOLTSPRIT.

B. B. B. (*alias* the Commodore) will now turn to his proofs. Havre de Grace is a city of some show. It is for-ti-fied ; and, so far as I can see, is a place of some trade. It is situ-ated in France, a country of Europe. You always complain there are no facts in my letters.

R. L. S.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*Newport, R.I., U.S.A., September,* 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—So long it went excellent well, and I had a time I am glad to have had ; really enjoying my life. There is nothing like being at sea, after all. And O, why have I allowed myself to rot so long on land ? But on the Banks I caught a cold, and I have not yet got over it. My reception here was idiotic to the last degree. . . . It is very silly, and not pleasant, except where humour enters ; and I confess the poor interviewer lads pleased me. They are too good for their trade ; avoided anything I asked them to avoid, and were no more vulgar in their reports than they could help. I liked the lads.

O, it was lovely on our stable-ship, chock full of stallions. She rolled heartily, rolled some of the fittings out of our state-room, and I think a more dangerous cruise (except that it was summer) it would be hard to imagine. But we enjoyed it to the masthead, all but Fanny ; and even she perhaps a little. When we got in, we had run out of beer, stout, cocoa, soda-water, water, fresh meat, and (almost) of biscuit. But it was a thousandfold pleasanter than a great big Birmingham liner like a new hotel ; and we liked the officers, and made friends with the quartermasters, and I (at least) made a friend of a baboon (for we carried a cargo

of apes), whose embraces have pretty near cost me a coat. The passengers improved, and were a very good specimen lot, with no drunkard, no gambling that I saw, and less grumbling and backbiting than one would have asked of poor human nature. Apes, stallions, cows, matches, hay, and poor men-folk, all, or almost all, came successfully to land.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

[*Newport, U.S.A., September*, 1887]

My dear James,—Here we are at Newport in the house of the good Fairchilds; and a sad burthen we have laid upon their shoulders. I have been in bed practically ever since I came. I caught a cold on the Banks after having had the finest time conceivable, and enjoyed myself more than I could have hoped on board our strange floating menagerie: stallions and monkeys and matches made our cargo; and the vast continent of these incongruities rolled the while like a haystack; and the stallions stood hypnotised by the motion, looking through the ports at our dinner-table, and winked when the crockery was broken; and the little monkeys stared at each other in their cages, and were thrown overboard like little bluish babies; and the big monkey, Jacko, scoured about the ship and rested willingly in my arms, to the ruin of my clothing; and the man of the stallions made a bower of the black tarpaulin, and sat therein at the feet of a raddled divinity, like a picture on a box of chocolates; and the other passengers, when they were not sick, looked on and laughed. Take all this picture, and make it roll till the bell shall sound unexpected notes and the fittings shall break loose in our state-room, and you have the voyage of the *Ludgate Hill*. She arrived in the port of New York, without beer, porter, soda-water, curaçoa, fresh meat, or fresh water; and yet we lived, and we regret her.

My wife is a good deal run down, and I am no great shakes.

America is, as I remarked, a fine place to eat in, and a great place for kindness; but, Lord, what a silly thing is popularity! I envy the cool obscurity of Skerryvore. If it even paid, said Meanness! and was abashed at himself. —Yours most sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

[*New York, end of September*, 1887]

MY DEAR S. C.,—Your delightful letter has just come, and finds me in a New York hotel, waiting the arrival of a sculptor (St. Gaudens) who is making a medallion of yours truly and who is (to boot) one of the handsomest and nicest fellows I have seen. I caught a cold on the Banks; fog is not for me; nearly died of interviewers and visitors, during twenty-four hours in New York; cut for Newport with Lloyd and Valentine, a journey like fairy-land for the most engaging beauties, one little rocky and pine-shaded cove after another, each with a house and a boat at anchor; so that I left my heart in each and marvelled why American authors had been so unjust to their country; caught another cold on the train; arrived at Newport to go to bed and to grow worse, and to stay in bed until I left again; the Fairchilds proving during this time kindness itself; Mr. Fairchild simply one of the most engaging men in the world, and one of the children, Blair, *aet.* ten, a great joy and amusement in his solemn adoring attitude to the author of *Treasure Island*.

Here I was interrupted by the arrival of my sculptor.—I withdraw calling him handsome; he is not quite that, his eyes are too near together; he is only remarkable looking, and like an Italian cinque-cento medallion; I have begged him to make a medallion of himself and give me a copy. I will not take up the sentence in which I was wandering so long, but begin fresh. I was ten or twelve days at Newport; then came back convalescent to New York. Fanny and Lloyd are off to the Adirondacks to see if that will

suit; and the rest of us leave Monday (this is Saturday) to follow them up. I hope we may manage to stay there all winter. I have a splendid appetite and have on the whole recovered well after a mighty sharp attack. I am now on a salary of £500 a year for twelve articles in *Scribner's Magazine* on what I like; it is more than £500, but I cannot calculate more precisely. You have no idea how much is made of me here; I was offered £2000 for a weekly article—eh heh! how is that? but I refused that lucrative job. The success of *Underwoods* is gratifying. You see, the verses are sane; that is their strong point, and it seems it is strong enough to carry them.

A thousand thanks for your grand letter.—Ever yours,

R. L. S.

To W. E. Henley

The verses herein alluded to were addressed to Rossetti's friend, Dr. Gordon Hake, physician and poet (1809-1895), in return for some received from him. They are those beginning "In the beloved hour that ushers day" and printed as No. xviii. in *Songs of Travel*.

New York [*September*, 1887]

My dear Lad,—Herewith verses for Dr. Hake, which please communicate. I did my best with the interviewers; I don't know if Lloyd sent you the result; my heart was too sick: you can do nothing with them; and yet—they literally sweated with anxiety to please, and took me down in long hand!

I have been quite ill, but go better. I am being not busted, but medallioned, by St. Gaudens, who is a first-rate, plain, high-minded artist and honest fellow; you would like him down to the ground. I believe sculptors are fine fellows when they are not demons. O, I am now a salaried person, £600 a year,* to write twelve articles in *Scribner's Magazine;* it remains to be seen if it really pays, huge as the sum is, but the slavery may overweigh

* For the actual sum see pp. 148, 149.

me. I hope you will like my answer to Hake, and specially that he will.

Love to all.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. S.
(*le salarié*)

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Saranac Lake, Adirondacks,
New York, U.S.A. [*October*, 1887]

My dear Bob,—The cold * was too rigorous for me; I could not risk the long railway voyage, and the season was too late to risk the Eastern, Cape Hatteras side of the steamer one; so here we stuck and stick. We have a wooden house on a hill-top, overlooking a river, and a village about a quarter of a mile away, and very wooded hills; the whole scene is very Highland, bar want of heather and the wooden houses.

I have got one good thing of my sea voyage: it is proved the sea agrees heartily with me, and my mother likes it; so if I get any better, or no worse, my mother will likely hire a yacht for a month or so in summer. Good Lord! What fun! Wealth is only useful for two things: a yacht and a string quartette. For these two I will sell my soul. Except for these I hold that £700 a year is as much as anybody can possibly want; and I have had more, so I know, for the extry coins were for no use, excepting for illness, which damns everything.

I was so happy on board that ship, I could not have believed it possible. We had the beastliest weather, and many discomforts; but the mere fact of its being a tramp-ship gave us many comforts; we could cut about with the men and officers, stay in the wheel-house, discuss all manner of things, and really be a little at sea. And truly there is nothing else. I had literally forgotten what happiness was, and the full mind—full of external and physical

* Of Colorado.

things, not full of cares and labours and rot about a fellow's behaviour. My heart literally sang; I truly care for nothing so much as for that. We took so north a course, that we saw Newfoundland; no one in the ship had ever seen it before.

It was beyond belief to me how she rolled; in seemingly smooth water, the bell striking, the fittings bounding out of our state-room. It is worth having lived these last years, partly because I have written some better books, which is always pleasant, but chiefly to have had the joy of this voyage. I have been made a lot of here, and it is sometimes pleasant, sometimes the reverse; but I could give it all up, and agree that —— was the author of my works, for a good seventy-ton schooner and the coins to keep her on. And to think there are parties with yachts who would make the change! I know a little about fame now; it is no good compared to a yacht; and anyway there is more fame in a yacht, more genuine fame; to cross the Atlantic and come to anchor in Newport (say) with the Union Jack, and go ashore for your letters and hang about the pier, among the holiday yachtsmen—that's fame, that's glory, and nobody can take it away; they can't say your book is bad, you *have* crossed the Atlantic. I should do it south by the West Indies, to avoid the damned Banks; and probably come home by steamer, and leave the skipper to bring the yacht home.

Well, if all goes well, we shall maybe sail out of Southampton water some of these days and take a run to Havre, and try the Baltic, or somewhere.

Love to you all—Ever your afft.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIR WALTER SIMPSON

It was supposed that Stevenson's letters to this friend, like those he wrote to Professor Fleeming Jenkin, had been destroyed or disappeared altogether. But here is one which turns out to

have been preserved by a friend to whom Sir Walter made a present of it.

[*Saranac Lake, October,* 1887]

MY DEAR SIMPSON,

the address is

c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,
243 Broadway, N.Y.

where I wish you would write and tell us you are better. But the place of our abode is Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks; it is a mighty good place too, and I mean it shall do me good. Indeed the dreadful depression and collapse of last summer has quite passed away; it was a thorough change I wanted; I wonder perhaps if it wouldn't pick you up—if you are not picked up already; you have been a long time in Great Britain; and that is a slow poison, very slow for the strong, but certain for all. Old Dr. Chepmell told Lloyd: anyone can stay a year in England and be the better for it, but no one can stay there steadily and not be the worse.

I have had a very curious experience here; being very much made of, and called upon, and all that; quite the famous party in fact: it is not so nice as people try to make out, when you are young, and don't want to bother working. Fame is nothing to a yacht; *experto crede.* There are nice bits of course; for you meet very pleasant and interesting people; but the thing at large is a bore and a fraud; and I am much happier up here, where I see no one and live my own life. One thing is they do not stick for money to the Famed One; I was offered £2000 a year for a weekly article; and I accepted (and now enjoy) £720 a year for a monthly one: $\frac{720}{12}$ (whatever that may be) for each article, as long or as short as I please, and on any mortal subject. I am sure it will do me harm to do it; but the sum was irresistible. See calculations on verso of last page, and observe, sir, the accuracy of my methods.

Hulloh, I must get up, as I can't lose any time. Goodbye, remember me to her ladyship and salute the Kids.—Ever your friend,

R. L. S.

12 : 10 :: 72 : x, and this results in the same problem. Well—tackle it.

12)720(60
72
Is it possible ?
£60 !!??

Let us cheque it by trying it in dollars, $3500 per an.

12)3500(291.80
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Well : $291.80

then divide by 5 for a rough test

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25 add 80 cents = 40d. = 3. 4d.
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Well, call it

£58.10.

and be done with it !

To Edmund Gosse

The following refers to a review by Mr. Gosse of Stevenson's volume of verse called *Underwoods*. The book had been published a few weeks previously, and is dedicated, as readers will remember, to a number of physicians who had attended him at sundry times and places.

Saranac Lake, Oct. 8th, 1887

My dear Gosse,—I have just read your article twice, with cheers of approving laughter. I do not believe you ever wrote anything so funny: Tyndall's "shell," the passage on the Davos press and its invaluable issues, and that on V. Hugo and Swinburne, are exquisite; so, I

say it more ruefully, is the touch about the doctors. For the rest, I am very glad you like my verses so well; and the qualities you ascribe to them seem to me well found and well named. I own to that kind of candour you attribute to me: when I am frankly interested, I suppose I fancy the public will be so too; and when I am moved, I am sure of it. It has been my luck hitherto to meet with no staggering disillusion. "Before" and "After" may be two; and yet I believe the habit is now too thoroughly ingrained to be altered. About the doctors, you were right, that dedication has been the subject of some pleasantries that made me grind, and of your happily touched reproof which made me blush. And to miscarry in a dedication is an abominable form of book-wreck; I am a good captain, I would rather lose the text and save my dedication.

I am at Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks, I suppose for the winter: seems a first-rate place; we have a house in the eye of many winds, with a view of a piece of running water—Highland, all but the dear hue of peat—and of many hills—Highland also, but for the lack of heather. Soon the snow will close on us; we are here some twenty miles—twenty-seven, they say, but this I profoundly disbelieve—in the woods: communication by letter is slow and (let me be consistent) aleatory; by telegram is as near as may be impossible.

I had some experience of American appreciation; I liked a little of it, but there is too much; a little of that would go a long way to spoil a man; and I like myself better in the woods. I am so damned candid and ingenuous (for a cynic), and so much of a "cweatu' of impulse—aw" (if you remember that admirable Leech) that I begin to shirk any more taffy; I think I begin to like it too well. But let us trust the Gods; they have a rod in pickle; reverently I doff my trousers, and with screwed eyes await the *amari aliquid* of the great God Busby.

I thank you for the article in all ways, and remain yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

[*Saranac Lake, October*, 1887]

SIR,—I have to trouble you with the following *paroles bien senties*. We are here at a first-rate place. "Baker's" is the name of our house, but we don't address there; we prefer the tender care of the Post Office, as more aristocratic (it is no use to telegraph even to the care of the Post Office, who does not give a single damn *). Baker's has a prophet's chamber, which the hypercritical might describe as a garret with a hole in the floor: in that garret, sir, I have to trouble you and your wife to come and slumber. Not now, however: with manly hospitality, I choke off any sudden impulse. Because first, my wife and my mother are gone (a note for the latter, strongly suspected to be in the hand of your talented wife, now sits silent on the mantel-shelf), one to Niagara and t'other to Indianapolis. Because, second, we are not yet installed. And because, third, I won't have you till I have a buffalo robe and leggings, lest you should want to paint me as a plain man, which I am not, but a rank Saranacker and wild man of the woods. —Yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To CHARLES FAIRCHILD

Post Office, Saranac Lake,
Adirondacks, N.Y. [*October*, 1887]

MY DEAR FAIRCHILD,—I do not live in the Post Office; that is only my address; I live at "Baker's," a house upon a hill, and very jolly in every way. I believe this is going to do: we have a kind of a garret of a spare room, where hardy visitors can sleep, and our table (if homely) is not bad.

And here, appropriately enough, comes in the begging

* "But she was more than usual calm,
She did not give a single dam."
—*Marjorie Fleming.*

part. We cannot get any fruit here: can you manage to send me some grapes? I told you I would trouble you, and I will say that I do so with pleasure, which means a great deal from yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Remember us to all yours: my mother and my wife are away skylarking; my mother to Niagara, my wife to Indianapolis; and I live here to-day alone with Lloyd, Valentine, some cold meat, and four salmon trout, one of which is being grilled at this moment of writing; so that, after the immortal pattern of the Indian boys, my household will soon only reckon three. As usual with me, the news comes in a P.S., and is mostly folly.

R. L. S.

P.P.S.—My cold is so much better that I took another yesterday. But the new one is a puny child; I fear him not; and yet I fear to boast. If the postscript business goes on, this establishment will run out of P's; but I hope it wasn't you that made this paper—just for a last word—I could not compliment you upon that. And Lord! if you could see the ink—not what I am using—but the local vintage! They don't write much here; I bet what you please.

R. L. S.

TO WILLIAM ARCHER

The Wondrous Tale referred to in the following is Stevenson's *Black Arrow*, which had been through Mr. Archer's hands in proof.

Saranac Lake, October, 1887

DEAR ARCHER,—Many thanks for the Wondrous Tale. It is scarcely a work of genius, as I believe you felt. Thanks also for your pencillings; though I defend "shrew," or at least many of the shrews.

We are here (I suppose) for the winter in the Adirondacks, a hill and forest country on the Canadian border of New

York State, very unsettled and primitive and cold, and healthful, or we are the more bitterly deceived. I believe it will do well for me ; but must not boast.

My wife is away to Indiana to see her family ; my mother, Lloyd, and I remain here in the cold, which has been exceeding sharp, and the hill air, which is inimitably fine. We all eat bravely, and sleep well, and make great fires, and get along like one o'clock.

I am now a salaried party ; I am a *bourgeois* now ; I am to write a weekly paper for *Scribner's*, at a scale of payment which makes my teeth ache for shame and diffidence. The editor is, I believe, to apply to you ; for we were talking over likely men, and when I instanced you, he said he had had his eye upon you from the first. It is worth while, perhaps, to get in tow with the Scribners ; they are such thorough gentlefolk in all ways that it is always a pleasure to deal with them. I am like to be a millionaire if this goes on, and be publicly hanged at the social revolution : well, I would prefer that to dying in my bed ; and it would be a godsend to my biographer, if ever I have one. What are you about ? I hope you are all well and in good case and spirits, as I am now, after a most nefast experience of despondency before I left ; but indeed I was quite run down. Remember me to Mrs. Archer, and give my respects to Tom.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

" Gleeson White " in this letter means the collection of *Ballades, Rondeaus, &c.*, edited by that gentleman and dedicated to R. L. S. (Walter Scott, 1887).

[*Saranac Lake, October*, 1887]

MY DEAR LAD,—I hear some vague reports of a success * at Montreal.

My news is not much, my mother is away to Niagara and

* Of the play *Deacon Brodie*.

Fanny to Indiana ; the Port Admiral and I and Valentine keep house together in our verandahed cottage near a wood. I am writing, and have got into the vein. When I got to N. Y. a paper offered me £2000 a year to do critical weekly articles for them ; the sum was so enormous that I tottered ; however, Scribner at once offered me the same scale to give him a monthly paper in his magazine ; indeed it is rather higher, £720 for the twelve papers. This I could not decently refuse ; and I am now a yoked man, and after a fit of my usual impotence under bondage, seem to have got into the swing. I suppose I shall scarce manage to do much else ; but there is the fixed sum, which shines like a sun in the firmament. A prophet has certainly a devil of a lot of honour (and much coins) in another country, whatever he has in his own.

I got Gleeson White ; your best work and either the best or second best in the book is the Ballade in Hot Weather ; that is really a masterpiece of melody and fancy. Damn your Villanelles—and everybody's. G. Macdonald comes out strong in his two pious rondels ; *Fons Bandusiæ* seems as exquisite as ever. To my surprise, I liked two of the Pantoums, the blue-bottle, and the still better after-death one from *Love in Idleness*. Lang cuts a poor figure, except in the Cricket one ; your patter ballade is a great *tour de force*, but spoiled by similar cæsuras. On the whole 'tis a ridiculous volume, and I had more pleasure out of it than I expected. I forgot to praise Grant Allen's excellent ballade, which is the one that runs with yours,—and here, to the point, a note from you at Margate—among East Winds and Plain Women, damn them ! Well, what can we do or say ? We are only at Saranac for the winter ; and if this *Deacon* comes off, why you may join us there in glory ; I would I had some news of it. Saranac is not *quite* so dear, in some ways, as the rest of this land, where it costs you a pound to sneeze, and fifty to blow your nose ; but even here it costs $2.50 to get a box from the station ! Think of it ! Lift it up tenderly ! They had need to pay well ! but how poor devils live ; and how it can pay to take a theatre company over to such a land, is more than I can

fancy The devil of the States for you is the conveyances, they are so dear—but O, what is not!

I have thrown off my cold in excellent style, though still very groggy about the knees, so that when I climb a paling, of which we have many, I feel as precarious and nutatory as a man of ninety. Under this I grind; but I believe the place will suit me. Must stop.—Ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

The "dear Alexander" mentioned below is Mr. J. W. Alexander, the well-known American artist, who had been a welcome visitor to Stevenson at Bournemouth, and had drawn his portrait there. The humorous romance proceeding from Mr. Osbourne's typewriter was the first draft of *The Wrong Box*: or, as it was originally called, *The Finsbury Tontine, or, The Game of Bluff*. The article by Mr. Henry James referred to in the last paragraph is one on R. L. S. which had appeared in the *Century Magazine* for October, and was reprinted in *Partial Portraits*.

[*Saranac Lake, October*, 1887] I know not the day; but the month it is the drear October by the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

My dear Henry James,—This is to say *First*, the voyage was a huge success. We all enjoyed it (bar my wife) to the ground: sixteen days at sea with a cargo of hay, matches, stallions, and monkeys, and in a ship with no style on, and plenty of sailors to talk to, and the endless pleasures of the sea—the romance of it, the sport of the scratch dinner and the smashing of crockery, the pleasure—an endless pleasure—of balancing to the swell: well, it's over.

Second, I had a fine time, rather a troubled one, at Newport and New York; saw much of and liked hugely the Fairchilds, St. Gaudens the sculptor, Gilder of the *Century*—just saw the dear Alexander—saw a lot of my old and admirable friend Will Low, whom I wish you knew and appreciated—was medallioned by St. Gaudens, and at last escaped to

Third, Saranac Lake, where we now are, and which I believe we mean to like and pass the winter at. Our house —emphatically " Baker's "—is on a hill, and has a sight of a stream turning a corner in the valley—bless the face of running water !—and sees some hills too, and the paganly prosaic roofs of Saranac itself; the Lake it does not see, nor do I regret that; I like water (fresh water I mean) either running swiftly among stones, or else largely qualified with whisky. As I write, the sun (which has been long a stranger) shines in at my shoulder; from the next room, the bell of Lloyd's typewriter makes an agreeable music as it patters off (at a rate which astonishes this experienced novelist) the early chapters of a humorous romance; from still further off—the walls of Baker's are neither ancient nor massive—rumours of Valentine about the kitchen stove come to my ears; of my mother and Fanny I hear nothing, for the excellent reason that they have gone sparking off, one to Niagara, one to Indianapolis. People complain that I never give news in my letters. I have wiped out that reproach.

But now, *Fourth*, I have seen the article; and it may be from natural partiality, I think it the best you have written. O—I remember the Gautier, which was an excellent performance; and the Balzac, which was good; and the Daudet, over which I licked my chops; but the R. L. S. is better yet. It is so humorous, and it hits my little frailties with so neat (and so friendly) a touch; and Alan is the occasion for so much happy talk, and the quarrel is so generously praised. I read it twice, though it was only some hours in my possession; and Low, who got it for me from the *Century*, sat up to finish it ere he returned it; and, sir, we were all delighted. Here is the paper out, nor will anything, not even friendship, not even gratitude for the article, induce me to begin a second sheet; so here, with the kindest remembrances and the warmest good wishes, I remain, yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

[Saranac Lake], 18th November, 1887

My dear Charles,—No likely I'm going to waste a sheet of paper. . . . I am offered £1600 ($8000) for the American serial rights on my next story! As you say, times are changed since the Lothian Road. Well, the Lothian Road was grand fun too; I could take an afternoon of it with great delight. But I'm awfu' grand noo, and long may it last!

Remember me to any of the faithful—if there are any left. I wish I could have a crack with you.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

I find I have forgotten more than I remembered of business. . . . Please let us know (if you know) for how much Skerryvore is let; you will here detect the female mind; I let it for what I could get; nor shall the possession of this knowledge (which I am happy to have forgot) increase the amount by so much as the shadow of a sixpenny piece; but my females are agog.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Charles Scribner

Shortly after the date of the present correspondence Stevenson, to his great advantage, put all his publishing arrangements (as he had already put his private business) into the hands of his friend Baxter. Meantime he was managing them himself; and an occasional lapse of memory or attention betrayed him once or twice into misunderstandings, and once at least conflicting agreements with two different publishers, both his friends. He was the first to denounce the error when he became aware of it, and suffered sharply from the sense of his own unintentional fault. The next two letters, and some allusions in those which follow, relate to this affair.

[Saranac Lake, November 20 or 21, 1887]

My dear Mr. Scribner,—Heaven help me, I am under a curse just now. I have played fast and loose with what I said to you; and that, I beg you to believe, in the purest

innocence of mind. I told you you should have the power over all my work in this country; and about a fortnight ago, when M'Clure was here, I calmly signed a bargain for the serial publication of a story. You will scarce believe that I did this in mere oblivion; but I did; and all that I can say is that I will do so no more, and ask you to forgive me. Please write to me soon as to this.

Will you oblige me by paying in for three articles, as already sent, to my account with John Paton & Co., 52 William Street? This will be most convenient for us.

The fourth article is nearly done; and I am the more deceived, or it is *A Buster*.

Now as to the first thing in this letter, I do wish to hear from you soon; and I am prepared to hear any reproach, or (what is harder to hear) any forgiveness; for I have deserved the worst.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

This is the first of many letters, increasing in friendliness as the correspondence goes on, to the editor of *Scribner's Magazine*.

[*Saranac Lake, November*, 1887]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—I enclose corrected proof of *Beggars*, which seems good. I mean to make a second sermon, which, if it is about the same length as *Pulvis et Umbra*, might go in along with it as two sermons, in which case I should call the first "The Whole Creation," and the second "Any Good." We shall see; but you might say how you like the notion.

One word: if you have heard from Mr. Scribner of my unhappy oversight in the matter of a story you will make me ashamed to write to you, and yet I wish to beg you to help me into quieter waters. The oversight committed—and I do think it was not so bad as Mr. Scribner seems to think it—and discovered, I was in a miserable position. I need not tell you that my first impulse was to offer to share or to

surrender the price agreed upon when it should fall due; and it is almost to my credit that I arranged to refrain. It is one of these positions from which there is no escape; I cannot undo what I have done. And I wish to beg you—should Mr. Scribner speak to you in the matter—to try to get him to see this neglect of mine for no worse than it is: unpardonable enough, because a breach of an agreement; but still pardonable, because a piece of sheer carelessness and want of memory, done, God knows, without design and since most sincerely regretted. I have no memory. You have seen how I omitted to reserve the American rights in *Jekyll:* last winter I wrote and demanded, as an increase, a less sum than had already been agreed upon for a story that I gave to Cassell's. For once that my forgetfulness has, by a cursed fortune, seemed to gain, instead of lose, me money, it is painful indeed that I should produce so poor an impression on the mind of Mr. Scribner. But I beg you to believe, and if possible to make him believe, that I am in no degree or sense a *faiseur*, and that in matters of business my design, at least, is honest. Nor (bating bad memory and self-deception) am I untruthful in such affairs.

If Mr. Scribner shall have said nothing to you in the matter, please regard the above as unwritten, and believe me, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Saranac Lake, November*, 1887]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—The revise seemed all right, so I did not trouble you with it; indeed, my demand for one was theatrical, to impress that obdurate dog, your reader. Herewith a third paper: it has been a cruel long time upon the road, but here it is, and not bad at last, I fondly hope. I was glad you liked the *Lantern Bearers;* I did, too. I thought it was a good paper, really contained some excellent sense, and was ingeniously put together. I have not often had more trouble than I have with these

papers; thirty or forty pages of foul copy, twenty is the very least I have had. Well, you pay high; it is fit that I should have to work hard, it somewhat quiets my conscience.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

Saranac Lake, Adirondack Mountains,
New York, U.S.A., November 21, 1887

MY DEAR SYMONDS,—I think we have both meant and wanted to write to you any time these months; but we have been much tossed about, among new faces and old, and new scenes and old, and scenes (like this of Saranac) which are neither one nor other. To give you some clue to our affairs, I had best begin pretty well back. We sailed from the Thames in a vast bucket of iron that took seventeen days from shore to shore. I cannot describe how I enjoyed the voyage, nor what good it did me: but on the Banks I caught friend catarrh. In New York and then in Newport I was pretty ill; but on my return to New York, lying in bed most of the time, with St. Gaudens the sculptor sculping me, and my old friend Low around, I began to pick up once more. Now here we are in a kind of wilderness of hills and firwoods and boulders and snow and wooden houses. So far as we have gone the climate is grey and harsh, but hungry and somnolent; and although not charming like that of Davos, essentially bracing and briskening. The country is a kind of insane mixture of Scotland and a touch of Switzerland and a dash of America, and a thought of the British Channel in the skies. We have a decent house——

December 6th.—A decent house, as I was saying, sir, on a hill-top, with a look down a Scottish river in front, and on one hand a Perthshire hill; on the other, the beginnings and skirts of the village play hide and seek among other hills. We have been below zero, I know not how far (·10 at 8 A.M. once), and when it is cold it is delightful; but

hitherto the cold has not held, and we have chopped in and out from frost to thaw, from snow to rain, from quiet air to the most disastrous north-westerly curdlers of the blood. After a week of practical thaw, the ice still bears in favoured places. So there is hope.

I wonder if you saw my book of verses? It went into a second edition, because of my name, I suppose, and its *prose* merits. I do not set up to be a poet. Only an all-round literary man: a man who talks, not one who sings. But I believe the very fact that it was only speech served the book with the public. Horace is much a speaker, and see how popular! most of Martial is only speech, and I cannot conceive a person who does not love his Martial; most of Burns, also, such as "The Louse," "The Tooth-ache," "The Haggis," and lots more of his best. Excuse this little apology for my muse; but I don't like to come before people who have a note of song, and let it be supposed I do not know the difference.

To return to the more important—news. My wife again suffers in high and cold places; I again profit. She is off to-day to New York for a change, as heretofore to Berne, but I am glad to say in better case than then. Still it is undeniable she suffers, and you must excuse her (at least) if we both prove bad correspondents. I am decidedly better, but I have been terribly cut up with business complications: one disagreeable, as threatening loss; one, of the most intolerable complexion, as involving me in dishonour. The burthen of consistent carelessness: I have lost much by it in the past; and for once (to my damnation) I have gained. I am sure you will sympathise. It is hard work to sleep; it is hard to be told you are a liar, and have to hold your peace, and think, "Yes, by God, and a thief too!" You remember my lectures on Ajax, or the Unintentional Sin? Well, I know all about that now. Nothing seems so unjust to the sufferer: or is more just in essence. *Laissez passer la justice de Dieu.*

Lloyd has learned to use the typewriter, and has most gallantly completed upon that the draft of a tale, which seems to me not without merit and promise, it is so silly,

so gay, so absurd, in spots (to my partial eyes) so genuinely humorous. It is true, he would not have written it but for the *New Arabian Nights;* but it is strange to find a young writer funny. Heavens, but I was depressing when I took the pen in hand! And now I doubt if I am sadder than my neighbours. Will this beginner move in the inverse direction?

Let me have your news, and believe me, my dear Symonds, with genuine affection, yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To W. E. HENLEY

The following refers to a volume on the elder Dumas, which Mr. Henley was at this time preparing to write, and which he proposed to dedicate to his friend.

Saranac [*December*, 1887]

MY DEAR LAD,—I was indeed overjoyed to hear of the *Dumas*. In the matter of the dedication, are not cross dedications a little awkward? Lang and Rider Haggard did it, to be sure. Perpend. And if you should conclude against a dedication, there is a passage in *Memories and Portraits* written *at* you, when I was most desperate (to stir you up a bit), which might be quoted: something about Dumas still waiting his biographer. I have a decent time when the weather is fine; when it is grey, or windy, or wet (as it too often is), I am merely degraded to the dirt. I get some work done every day with a devil of a heave; not extra good ever; and I regret my engagement. Whiles I have had the most deplorable business annoyances too; have been threatened with having to refund money; got over that; and found myself in the worst scrape of being a kind of unintentional swindler. These have worried me a great deal; also old age with his stealing steps seems to have clawed me in his clutch to some tune.

Do you play All Fours? We are trying it; it is still all haze to me. Can the elder hand *beg* more than once? The Port Admiral is at Boston mingling with millionaires.

I am but a weed on Lethe wharf. The wife is only so-so. The Lord leads us all: if I can only get off the stage with clean hands, I shall sing Hosanna. "Put" is described quite differently from your version in a book I have; what are your rules? The Port Admiral is using a game of Put in a tale of his, the first copy of which was gloriously finished about a fortnight ago, and the revise gallantly begun: *The Finsbury Tontine* it is named, and might fill two volumes, and is quite incredibly silly, and in parts (it seems to me) pretty humorous.—Love to all from

AN OLD, OLD MAN.

I say, Taine's *Origines de la France Contemporaine* is no end; it would turn the dead body of Charles Fox into a living Tory.

TO MRS. FLEEMING JENKIN

[*Saranac Lake, December,* 1887]

MY DEAR MRS. JENKIN,—The Opal is very well; it is fed with glycerine when it seems hungry. I am very well, and get about much more than I could have hoped. My wife is not very well; there is no doubt the high level does not agree with her, and she is on the move for a holiday to New York. Lloyd is at Boston on a visit, and I hope has a good time. My mother is really first-rate: she and I, despairing of other games for two, now play All Fours out of a game-book, and have not yet discovered its niceties, if any.

You will have heard, I daresay, that they made a great row over me here. They also offered me much money, a great deal more than my works are worth: I took some of it, and was greedy and hasty, and am now very sorry. I have done with big prices from now out. Wealth and self-respect seem, in my case, to be strangers.

We were talking the other day of how well Fleeming managed to grow rich. Ah, that is a rare art; something more intellectual than a virtue. The book has not yet

made its appearance here; the Life alone, with a little preface, is to appear in the States; and the Scribners are to send you half the royalties. I should like it to do well, for Fleeming's sake.

Will you please send me the Greek water-carrier's song? I have a particular use for it.

Have I any more news, I wonder?—and echo wonders along with me. I am strangely disquieted on all political matters; and I do not know if it is "the signs of the times" or the sign of my own time of life. But to me the sky seems black both in France and England, and only partly clear in America. I have not seen it so dark in my time; of that I am sure.

Please let us have some news; and excuse me, for the sake of my well-known idleness; and pardon Fanny, who is really not very well, for this long silence.—Very sincerely your friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

The lady at Bournemouth (the giver of the paper-knife) to whom the following letter is addressed had been trusted to keep an eye on Stevenson's interests in connection with his house (which had been let) and other matters, and to report thereon from time to time. In their correspondence Stevenson is generally referred to as the Squire and the lady as the Gamekeeper.

[*Saranac Lake, December*, 1887]

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—I am so much afraid our gamekeeper may weary of unacknowledged reports! Hence, in the midst of a perfect horror of detestable weathers of a quite incongruous strain, and with less desire for correspondence than—well, than—well, with no desire for correspondence, behold me dash into the breach. Do keep up your letters. They are most delightful to this exiled backwoods family; and in your next, we shall hope somehow or other to hear better news of you and yours—that in the first place—and to hear more news of our beasts and

birds and kindly fruits of earth and those human tenants who are (truly) too much with us.

I am very well; better than for years: that is for good. But then my wife is no great shakes; the place does not suit her—it is my private opinion that no place does—and she is now away down to New York for a change, which (as Lloyd is in Boston) leaves my mother and me and Valentine alone in our wind-beleaguered hill-top hat-box of a house. You should hear the cows butt against the walls in the early morning while they feed; you should also see our back log when the thermometer goes (as it does go) away—away below zero, till it can be seen no more by the eye of man—not the thermometer, which is still perfectly visible, but the mercury, which curls up into the bulb like a hibernating bear; you should also see the lad who "does chores" for us, with his red stockings and his thirteen-year-old face, and his highly manly tramp into the room; and his two alternative answers to all questions about the weather: either "Cold," or with a really lyrical movement of the voice, "*Lovely*—raining!"

Will you take this miserable scrap for what it is worth? Will you also understand that I am the man to blame, and my wife is really almost too much out of health to write, or at least doesn't write?—And believe me, with fond remembrances to Mrs. Boodle and your sisters, very sincerely yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

The supposed Lord Warmingpan of the following was really Lord Pollington.

Saranac Lake, 12th December, '8.

Give us news of all your folk. A Merry Christmas from all of us.

MY DEAR CHARLES,—Will you please send £20 to—— —— for a Christmas form ——? Moreover, I cannot remember what I told you to send to ——; but as God has dealt so

providentially with me this year, I now propose to make it £20.

I beg of you also to consider my strange position. I jined a club which it was said was to defend the Union; and I had a letter from the secretary, which his name I believe was Lord Warmingpan (or words to that effect), to say I am elected, and had better pay up a certain sum of money, I forget what. Now I cannae verra weel draw a blank cheque and send to—

LORD WARMINGPAN (or words to that effect),
London, England

And, man, if it was possible, I would be dooms glad to be out of this bit scrapie. Mebbe the club was ca'd "The Union," but I wouldnae like to sweir; and mebbe it was nae, or mebbe only words to that effec' but I wouldnae care just exac'ly about sweirin'. Do ye no' think Henley, or Pollick, or some o' they London fellies, micht mebbe perhaps find out for me? and just what the soom was? And that you would aiblins pay for me? For I thocht I was sae dam patriotic jinin', and it would be a kind o' a comedoun to be turned out again. Mebbe Lang would ken; or mebbe Rider Haggyard: they're kind o' Union folks. But it's my belief his name was Warmingpan whatever.—Yours,

THOMSON,
alias ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Could it be Warminster?

To MISS MONROE

The play of *Deacon Brodie* was at this time being performed at Chicago, with Mr. E. J. Henley in the title-part.

Saranac Lake, New York [*December* 19, 1887]

DEAR MISS MONROE,—Many thanks for your letter and your good wishes. It was much my desire to get to Chicago: had I done—or if I yet do—so, I shall hope to see the original of my photograph, which is one of my show

possessions ; but the fates are rather contrary. My wife is far from well ; I myself dread, worse than almost any other imaginable peril, that miraculous and really insane invention, the American Railroad Car. Heaven help the man—may I add the woman—that sets foot in one ! Ah, if it were only an ocean to cross, it would be a matter of small thought to me—and great pleasure. But the railroad car—every man has his weak point ; and I fear the railroad car as abjectly as I do an earwig, and, on the whole, on better grounds. You do not know how bitter it is to have to make such a confession ; for you have not the pretension nor the weakness of a man. If I do get to Chicago, you will hear of me : so much can be said. And do you never come east ?

I was pleased to recognise a word of my poor old *Deacon* in your letter. It would interest me very much to hear how it went and what you thought of piece and actors ; and my collaborator, who knows and respects the photograph, would be pleased too.—Still in the hope of seeing you, I am, yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO HENRY JAMES

[*Saranac Lake, Winter* 1887-88]

MY DEAR HENRY JAMES,—It may please you to know how our family has been employed. In the silence of the snow the afternoon lamp has lighted an eager fireside group : my mother reading, Fanny, Lloyd, and I devoted listeners ; and the work was really one of the best works I ever heard ; and its author is to be praised and honoured ; and what do you suppose is the name of it ? and have you ever read it yourself ? and (I am bound I will get to the bottom of the page before I blow the gaff, if I have to fight it out on this line all summer ; for if you have not to turn a leaf, there can be no suspense, the conspectory eye being swift to pick out proper names ; and without suspense, there can be little pleasure in this world, to my mind at least)—

and, in short, the name of it is *Roderick Hudson*, if you please. My dear James, it is very spirited, and very sound, and very noble too. Hudson, Mrs. Hudson, Rowland, O, all first-rate: Rowland a very fine fellow; Hudson as good as he can stick (did you know Hudson? I suspect you did), Mrs. H. his real born mother, a thing rarely managed in fiction.

We are all keeping pretty fit and pretty hearty; but this letter is not from me to you, it is from a reader of *R. H.* to the author of the same, and it says nothing, and has nothing to say, but thank you.

We are going to re-read *Casamassima* as a proper pendant. Sir, I think these two are your best, and care not who knows it.

May I beg you, the next time *Roderick* is printed off, to go over the sheets of the last few chapters, and strike out "immense" and "tremendous"? You have simply dropped them there like your pocket-handkerchief; all you have to do is to pick them up and pouch them, and your room—what do I say?—your cathedral!—will be swept and garnished.—I am, dear sir, your delighted reader,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Perhaps it is a pang of causeless honesty, perhaps I hope it will set a value on my praise of *Roderick*, perhaps it's a burst of the diabolic, but I must break out with the news that I can't bear the *Portrait of a Lady*. I read it all, and I wept too; but I can't stand your having written it; and I beg you will write no more of the like. *Infra*, sir; Below you; I can't help it—it may be your favourite work, but in my eyes it's BELOW YOU to write and me to read. I thought *Roderick* was going to be another such at the beginning: and I cannot describe my pleasure as I found it taking bones and blood, and looking out at me with a moved and human countenance, whose lineaments are written in my memory until my last of days.

R. L. S.

My wife begs your forgiveness; I believe for her silence.

To Sidney Colvin

Saranac Lake [*December*, 1887]

My dear Colvin,—This goes to say that we are all fit, and the place is very bleak and wintry, and up to now has shown no such charms of climate as Davos, but is a place where men eat and where the cattarh, catarrh (cattarrh, or cattarrhh) appears to be unknown. I walk in my verandy in the snaw, sir, looking down over one of those dabbled wintry landscapes that are (to be frank) so chilly to the human bosom, and up at a grey, English—nay, *mehercle*, Scottish—heaven; and I think it pretty bleak; and the wind swoops at me round the corner, like a lion, and fluffs the snow in my face; and I could aspire to be elsewhere; but yet I do not catch cold, and yet, when I come in, I eat. So that hitherto Saranac, if not deliriously delectable, has not been a failure; nay, from the mere point of view of the wicked body, it has proved a success. But I wish I could still get to the woods; alas, *nous n'irons plus au bois* is my poor song; the paths are buried, the dingles drifted full, a little walk is grown a long one; till spring comes, I fear the burthen will hold good.

I get along with my papers for Scribner not fast, nor so far specially well; only this last, the fourth one (which makes a third part of my whole task), I do believe is pulled off after a fashion. It is a mere sermon: "Smith opens out" *; but it is true, and I find it touching and beneficial, to me at least; and I think there is some fine writing in it, some very apt and pregnant phrases. *Pulvis et Umbra*, I call it; I might have called it a Darwinian Sermon, if I had wanted. Its sentiments, although parsonic, will not offend even you, I believe. The other three papers, I fear, bear many traces of effort, and the ungenuine inspiration

* "Smith opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals."

The Rev. George Smith of Galston, the minister thus referred to by Burns (in the *Holy Fair*), was a great grandfather of Stevenson on the mother's side; and against Stevenson himself, in his didactic moods, the passage was often quoted by his friends when they wished to tease him.

of an income at so much per essay, and the honest desire of the incomer to give good measure for his money. Well, I did my damndest anyway.

We have been reading H. James's *Roderick Hudson*, which I eagerly press you to get at once: it is a book of a high order—the last volume in particular. I wish Meredith would read it. It took my breath away.

I am at the seventh book of the *Æneid*, and quite amazed at its merits (also very often floored by its difficulties). The Circe passage at the beginning, and the sublime business of Amata with the simile of the boy's top—O Lord, what a happy thought!—have specially delighted me.—I am, dear sir, your respected friend,

JOHN GREGG GILLSON, J.P., M.R.I.A., etc.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The following narrates the beginning of the author's labours on *The Master of Ballantrae*. An unfinished paper written some years later in Samoa, and intended for *Scribner's Magazine*, tells how the story first took shape in his mind. Under the title of *The Genesis of "The Master of Ballantrae"* it is reprinted as one of the prefaces to *The Master of Ballantrae* (vol. x., page xxiii.).

[*Saranac Lake, December* 24, 1887]

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Thank you for your explanations. I have done no more Virgil since I finished the seventh book, for I have first been eaten up with Taine, and next have fallen head over heels into a new tale, *The Master of Ballantrae*. No thought have I now apart from it, and I have got along up to page ninety-two of the draft with great interest. It is to me a most seizing tale; there are some fantastic elements; the most is a dead genuine human problem—human tragedy, I should say rather. It will be about as long, I imagine, as *Kidnapped*.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE:

(1) My old Lord Durrisdeer.
(2) The Master of Ballantrae, *and*
(3) Henry Durie, *his sons*.

(4) Clementina,* *engaged to the first, married to the second.*

(5) Ephraim Mackellar, *land steward at Durrisdeer and narrator of the most of the book.*

(6) Francis Burke, Chevalier de St. Louis, *one of Prince Charlie's Irishmen and narrator of the rest.*

Besides these, many instant figures, most of them dumb or nearly so: Jessie Brown the whore, Captain Crail, Captain MacCombie, our old friend Alan Breck, our old friend Riach (both only for an instant), Teach the pirate (vulgarly Blackbeard), John Paul and Macconochie, servants at Durrisdeer. The date is from 1745 to '65 (about). The scene, near Kirkcudbright, in the States, and for a little moment in the French East Indies. I have done most of the big work, the quarrel, duel between the brothers, and announcement of the death to Clementina and my Lord—Clementina, Henry, and Mackellar (nicknamed Square-toes) are really very fine fellows; the Master is all I know of the devil. I have known hints of him, in the world, but always cowards; he is as bold as a lion, but with the same deadly, causeless duplicity I have watched with so much surprise in my two cowards. 'Tis true, I saw a hint of the same nature in another man who was not a coward; but he had other things to attend to; the Master has nothing else but his devilry. Here come my visitors—and have now gone, or the first relay of them; and I hope no more may come. For mark you, sir, this is our "day"—Saturday, as ever was; and here we sit, my mother and I, before a large wood fire and await the enemy with the most steadfast courage; and without snow and greyness: and the woman Fanny in New York for her health, which is far from good; and the lad Lloyd at the inn in the village because he has a cold; and the handmaid Valentine abroad in a sleigh upon her messages; and to-morrow Christmas and no mistake. Such is human life: *la carrière humaine.* I will enclose, if I remember, the required autograph.

* Afterwards changed to Alison.

I will do better, put it on the back of this page. Love to all, and mostly, my very dear Colvin, to yourself. For whatever I say or do, or don't say or do, you may be very sure I am—Yours always affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Saranac Lake, Christmas, 1887

My dear Miss Boodle,—And a very good Christmas to you all; and better fortune; and if worse, the more courage to support it—which I think is the kinder wish in all human affairs. Somewhile—I fear a good while—after this, you should receive our Christmas gift; we have no tact and no taste, only a welcome and (often) tonic brutality; and I daresay the present, even after my friend Baxter has acted on and reviewed my hints, may prove a White Elephant. That is why I dread presents. And therefore pray understand if any element of that hamper prove unwelcome, *it is to be exchanged*. I will not sit down under the name of a giver of White Elephants. I never had any elephant but one, and his initials were R. L. S.; and he trod on my foot at a very early age. But this is a fable, and not in the least to the point: which is that if, for once in my life, I have wished to make things nice for anybody but the Elephant (see fable), do not suffer me to have made them ineffably more embarrassing, and exchange—ruthlessly exchange!

For my part, I am the most cockered up of any mortal being; and one of the healthiest, or thereabout, at some modest distance from the bull's eye. I am condemned to write twelve articles in *Scribner's Magazine* for the love of gain; I think I had better send you them; what is far more to the purpose, I am on the jump with a new story which has bewitched me—I doubt it may bewitch no one else. It is called *The Master of Ballantrae*—pronounce Bălläntray. If it is not good, well, mine will be the fault; for I believe it is a good tale.

The greetings of the season to you, and your mother, and your sisters. My wife heartily joins.—And I am, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—You will think me an illiterate dog: I am, for the first time, reading Robertson's sermons. I do not know how to express how much I think of them. If by any chance you should be as illiterate as I, and not know them, it is worth while curing the defect.

R. L. S.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

The following letter invites Mr. Baxter to allow himself (under an *alias*) and his office in Edinburgh to figure in a preface to the new story. Such a preface was drafted accordingly, but on second thoughts suppressed; to be, on renewed consideration, reinstated in the final editions.

Saranac Lake, January, '88

DEAR CHARLES,—You are the flower of Doers. . . . Will my doer collaborate thus much in my new novel? In the year 1794 or 5, Mr. Ephraim Mackellar, A.M., late steward on the Durrisdeer estates, completed a set of memoranda (as long as a novel) with regard to the death of the (then) late Lord Durrisdeer, and as to that of his attainted elder brother, called by the family courtesy title the Master of Ballantrae. These he placed in the hands of John Macbrair, W.S., the family agent, on the understanding they were to be sealed until 1862, when a century would have elapsed since the affair in the wilderness (my lord's death). You succeeded Mr. Macbrair's firm; the Durisdeers are extinct, and last year, in an old green box, you found these papers with Macbrair's indorsation. It is that indorsation of which I want a copy; you may remember, when you gave me the papers, I neglected to take that, and I am sure you are a man too careful of antiquities to have let it fall aside. I shall have a little introduction descriptive of my visit to Edinburgh, arrival there,

denner with yoursel', and first reading of the papers in your smoking-room : all of which, of course, you well remember. —Ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

Your name is my friend Mr. Johnstone Thomson, W.S. !!!

To E. L. Burlingame

Saranac Lake, Winter, 1887-88

Dear Mr. Burlingame,—I am keeping the sermon to see if I can't add another. Meanwhile, I will send you very soon a different paper which may take its place. Possibly some of these days soon I may get together a talk on things current, which should go in (if possible) earlier than either. I am now less nervous about these papers ; I believe I can do the trick without great strain, though the terror that breathed on my back in the beginning is not yet forgotten.

The Master of Ballantrae I have had to leave aside, as I was quite worked out. But in about a week I hope to try back and send you the first four numbers : these are all drafted, it is only the revision that has broken me down, as it is often the hardest work. These four I propose you should set up for me at once, and we'll copyright 'em in a pamphlet. I will tell you the names of the *bona fide* purchasers in England.

The numbers will run from twenty to thirty pages of my manuscript. You can give me that much, can you not ? It is a howling good tale—at least these first four numbers are ; the end is a trifle more fantastic, but 'tis all picturesque.

Don't trouble about any more French books ; I am on another scent, you see, just now. Only the *French in Hindustan* I await with impatience, as that is for *Ballantrae.* The scene of that romance is Scotland—the States—Scotland—India—Scotland—and the States again ; so it jumps like a flea. I have enough about the States now, and very much obliged I am ; yet if Drake's *Tragedies of the*

Wilderness is (as I gather) a collection of originals, I should like to purchase it. If it is a picturesque vulgarisation, I do not wish to look it in the face. Purchase, I say; for I think it would be well to have some such collection by me with a view to fresh works.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—If you think of having the *Master* illustrated, I suggest that Hole would be very well up to the Scottish, which is the larger, part. If you have it done here, tell your artist to look at the hall of Craigievar in Billing's *Baronial and Ecclesiastical Antiquities*, and he will get a broad hint for the hall at Durrisdeer; it is, I think, the chimney of Craigievar and the roof of Pinkie, and perhaps a little more of Pinkie altogether; but I should have to see the book myself to be sure. Hole would be invaluable for this. I daresay if you had it illustrated, you could let me have one or two for the English edition.

R. L. S.

TO WILLIAM ARCHER

The following refers to Mr. Bernard Shaw's novel, *Cashel Byron's Profession*, which had been sent Stevenson to read by their common friend Mr Archer.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter*, 1887-88]

MY DEAR ARCHER,—What am I to say? I have read your friend's book with singular relish. If he has written any other, I beg you will let me see it; and if he has not, I beg him to lose no time in supplying the deficiency. It is full of promise; but I should like to know his age. There are things in it that are very clever, to which I attach small importance; it is the shape of the age. And there are passages, particularly the rally in presence of the Zulu king, that show genuine and remarkable narrative talent—a talent that few will have the wit to understand, a talent of strength, spirit, capacity, sufficient vision, and sufficient self-sacrifice, which last is the chief point in a narrator.

As a whole, it is (of course) a fever dream of the most feverish. Over Bashville the footman I howled with derision and delight; I dote on Bashville—I could read of him forever; *de Bashville je suis le fervent*—there is only one Bashville, and I am his devoted slave; *Bashville est magnifique, mais il n'est guère possible.* He is the note of the book. It is all mad, mad and deliriously delightful; the author has a taste in chivalry like Walter Scott's or Dumas', and then he daubs in little bits of socialism; he soars away on the wings of the romantic griffon—even the griffon, as he cleaves air, shouting with laughter at the nature of the quest—and I believe in his heart he thinks he is labouring in a quarry of solid granite realism.

It is this that makes me—the most hardened adviser now extant—stand back and hold my peace. If Mr. Shaw is below five-and-twenty, let him go his path; if he is thirty, he had best be told that he is a romantic, and pursue romance with his eyes open;—or perhaps, he knows it;—God knows!—my brain is softened.

It is HORRID FUN. All I ask is more of it. Thank you for the pleasure you gave us, and tell me more of the inimitable author.

(I say, Archer, my God, what women!)—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

1 part Charles Reade; 1 part Henry James or some kindred author badly assimilated; ½ part Disraeli (perhaps unconscious); 1½ parts struggling, over-laid original talent; 1 part blooming, gaseous folly. That is the equation as it stands. What it may be, I don't know, nor any other man. *Vixere fortes*—O, let him remember that—let him beware of his damned century; his gifts of insane chivalry and animated narration are just those that might be slain and thrown out like an untimely birth by the Dæmon of the epoch. And if he only knew how I have adored the chivalry! Bashville!—*O Bashville! j'en chortle* (which is fairly polyglot).

R. L. S.

To William Archer

[*Saranac Lake*], *February*, 1888

My dear Archer,—Pretty sick in bed ; but necessary to protest and continue your education.

Why was Jenkin an amateur in my eyes ? You think because not amusing (I think he often was amusing). The reason is this : I never, or almost never, saw two pages of his work that I could not have put in one without the smallest loss of material. That is the only test I know of writing. If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work. Then you will bring me up with old Dumas. Nay, the object of a story is to be long, to fill up hours ; the story-teller's art of writing is to water out by continual invention, historical and technical, and yet not seem to water ; seem on the other hand to practise that same wit of conspicuous and declaratory condensation which is the proper art of writing. That is one thing in which my stories fail : I am always cutting the flesh off the bones.

I would rise from the dead to preach !

Hope all well. I think my wife better, but she's not allowed to write ; and this (only wrung from me by desire to Boss and Parsonise and Dominate, strong in sickness) is my first letter for days, and will likely be my last for many more. Not blame my wife for her silence : doctor's orders. All much interested by your last, and fragment from brother, and anecdotes of Tomarcher.—The sick but still Moral

R. L. S.

Tell Shaw to hurry up : I want another.

To William Archer

In early days in Paris, Stevenson's chivalrous feelings had once been shocked by the scene in the *Demi-Monde* of Dumas fils,

where Suzanne d'Ange is trapped by Olivier de Jalin. His correspondent has asked what exactly took place.

[*Saranac Lake, February,* 1888 ?]

MY DEAR ARCHER,—It happened thus. I came forth from that performance in a breathing heat of indignation. (Mind, at this distance of time and with my increased knowledge, I admit there is a problem in the piece; but I saw none then, except a problem in brutality; and I still consider the problem in that case not established.) On my way down the *Français* stairs, I trod on an old gentleman's toes, whereupon with that suavity that so well becomes me, I turned about to apologise, and on the instant, repenting me of that intention, stopped the apology midway, and added something in French to this effect: No, you are one of the *lâches* who have been applauding that piece. I retract my apology. Said the old Frenchman, laying his hand on my arm, and with a smile that was truly heavenly in temperance, irony, good-nature, and knowledge of the world, "Ah, monsieur, vous êtes bien jeune!"—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To E. L. BURLINGAME

[*Saranac Lake, February,* 1888]

DEAR MR. BURLINGAME,—Will you send me (from the library) some of the works of my dear old G. P. R. James? With the following especially I desire to make or to renew acquaintance: *The Smuggler*, *The Gypsy*, *The Convict*, *The Stepmother*, *The Gentleman of the Old School*, *The Robber*.

Excusez du peu.

This sudden return to an ancient favourite hangs upon an accident. The "Franklin County Library" contains two works of his, *The Cavalier* and *Morley Ernstein*. I read the first with indescribable amusement—it was worse than I had feared, and yet somehow engaging; the second (to my surprise) was better than I had dared to hope: a

good, honest, dull, interesting tale, with a genuine old-fashioned talent in the invention when not strained; and a genuine old-fashioned feeling for the English language. This experience awoke appetite, and you see I have taken steps to stay it.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Saranac Lake, February*, 1888]

Dear Mr. Burlingame,—1. Of course then don't use it. Dear Man, I write these to please you, not myself, and you know a main sight better than I do what is good. In that case, however, I enclose another paper, and return the corrected proof of *Pulvis et Umbra*, so that we may be afloat.

2. I want to say a word as to the *Master*. (*The Master of Ballantrae* shall be the name by all means.) If you like and want it, I leave it to you to make an offer. You may remember I thought the offer you made when I was still in England too small; by which I did not at all mean, I thought it less than it was worth, but too little to tempt me to undergo the disagreeables of serial publication. This tale (if you want it) you are to have; for it is the least I can do for you; and you are to observe that the sum you pay me for my articles going far to meet my wants, I am quite open to be satisfied with less than formerly. I tell you I do dislike this battle of the dollars. I feel sure you all pay too much here in America; and I beg you not to spoil me any more. For I am getting spoiled: I do not want wealth, and I feel these big sums demoralise me.

My wife came here pretty ill; she had a dreadful bad night; to-day she is better. But now Valentine is ill; and Lloyd and I have got breakfast, and my hand somewhat shakes after washing dishes.—Yours very sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

P.S.—Please order me the *Evening Post* for two months. My subscription is run out. The *Mutiny* and *Edwardes* to hand.

To Sidney Colvin

[*Saranac Lake, March,* 1888]

My dear Colvin,—Fanny has been very unwell. She is not long home, has been ill again since her return, but is now better again to a degree. You must not blame her for not writing, as she is not allowed to write at all, not even a letter. To add to our misfortunes, Valentine is quite ill and in bed. Lloyd and I get breakfast; I have now, 10.15, just got the dishes washed and the kitchen all clear, and sit down to give you as much news as I have spirit for, after such an engagement. Glass is a thing that really breaks my spirit: I do not like to fail, and with glass I cannot reach the mark of my high calling—the artist's.

I am, as you may gather from this, wonderfully better: this harsh, grey, glum, doleful climate has done me good. You cannot fancy how sad a climate it is. When the thermometer stays all day below 10°, it is really cold; and when the wind blows, O commend me to the result. Pleasure in life is all delete; there is no red spot left, fires do not radiate, you burn your hands all the time on what seem to be cold stones. It is odd, zero is like summer heat to us now; and we like, when the thermometer outside is really low, a room at about 48° : 60° we find oppressive. Yet the natives keep their holes at 90° or even 100°.

This was interrupted days ago by household labours. Since then I have had and (I tremble to write it, but it does seem as if I had) beaten off an influenza. The cold is exquisite. Valentine still in bed. The proofs of the first part of *The Master of Ballantrae* begin to come in; soon you shall have it in the pamphlet form; and I hope you will like it. The second part will not be near so good; but there—we can but do as it'll do with us. I have every reason to believe this winter has done me real good, so far as it has gone; and if I carry out my scheme for next winter, and succeeding years, I should end by being a tower of strength. I want you to save a good holiday for next winter; I hope we shall be able to help you to some

larks. Is there any Greek Isle you would like to explore? or any creek in Asia Minor?—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To the Rev. Dr. Charteris

The Rev. Dr. Charteris, of Edinburgh, had been one of the most intimate and trusted friends of Stevenson's father, and R. L. S. turns to him accordingly for memories and impressions.

[*Saranac Lake, Winter*, 1887-88]

My dear Dr. Charteris,—I have asked Douglas and Foulis to send you my last volume, so that you may possess my little paper on my father in a permanent shape; not for what that is worth, but as a tribute of respect to one whom my father regarded with such love, esteem, and affection. Besides, as you will see, I have brought you under contribution, and I have still to thank you for your letter to my mother; so more than kind; in much, so just. It is my hope, when time and health permit, to do something more definite for my father's memory. You are one of the very few who can (if you will) help me. Pray believe that I lay on you no obligation; I know too well, you may believe me, how difficult it is to put even two sincere lines upon paper, where all, too, is to order. But if the spirit should ever move you, and you should recall something memorable of your friend, his son will heartily thank you for a note of it.—With much respect, believe me, yours sincerely,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Edmund Gosse

[*Saranac Lake, March* 31, 1888]

My dear Gosse,—Why so plaintive? Either the post-office has played us false, or you were in my debt. In case it should be my letter that has failed to come to post, I must tell again the fate of Mrs. Gosse's thermometer.

It hangs in our sitting-room, where it has often marked freezing point and below; "See what Gosse says," is a common word of command. But the point is this: in the verandah hangs another thermometer, condemned to register minus 40° and the class of temperatures; and to him, we have given the name of the Quarterly Reviewer. I hope the jape likes you.

Please tell the *Fortnightly* man that I am sorry but I can do nothing of that sort this year, as I am under a pledge to *Scribner's;* and indeed my monthly articles take the best of my time. It was a project I went into with horrid diffidence; and lucre was my only motive. I get on better than I expected, but it is difficult to find an article of the sort required for each date, and to vary the matter and keep up (if possible) the merit. I do not know if you think I have at all succeeded; it seemed to me this really worked paper was more money's worth (as well as probably better within my means) than the Lang business at the Sign of the Ship. Indeed I feel convinced I could never have managed that; it takes a gift to do it. Here is lunch.—Yours afftly.,

R. L. S.

To Henry James

[*Saranac Lake, March,* 1888]

My dear delightful James,—To quote your heading to my wife, I think no man writes so elegant a letter, I am sure none so kind, unless it be Colvin, and there is more of the stern parent about him. I was vexed at your account of my admired Meredith: I wish I could go and see him; as it is I will try to write; and yet (do you understand me?) there is something in that potent, *genialisch* affectation that puts one on the strain even to address him in a letter. He is not an easy man to be yourself with; there is so much of him, and the veracity and the high athletic intellectual humbug are so intermixed.* I read with inde-

* Alluding to a kind of lofty posturing way G. M. had both in mind and speech, quite different from any real insincerity.

scribable admiration your *Emerson*. I begin to long for the day when these portraits of yours shall be collected : do put me in. But Emerson is a higher flight. Have you a *Tourgueneff?* You have told me many interesting things of him, and I seem to see them written, and forming a graceful and *bildend* sketch. (I wonder whence comes this flood of German—I haven't opened a German book since I teethed.) My novel is a tragedy ; four parts out of six or seven are written, and gone to Burlingame. Five parts of it are bound, human tragedy ; the last one or two, I regret to say, not so soundly designed ; I almost hesitate to write them ; they are very picturesque, but they are fantastic ; they shame, perhaps degrade, the beginning. I wish I knew ; that was how the tale came to me however. I got the situation ; it was an old taste of mine : The older brother goes out in the '45, the younger stays ; the younger, of course, gets title and estate and marries the bride designate of the elder—a family match, but he (the younger) had always loved her, and she had really loved the elder. Do you see the situation ? Then the devil and Saranac suggested this *dénouement*, and I joined the two ends in a day or two of constant feverish thought, and began to write. And now—I wonder if I have not gone too far with the fantastic ? The elder brother is an INCUBUS : supposed to be killed at Culloden, he turns up again and bleeds the family of money ; on that stopping he comes and lives with them, whence flows the real tragedy, the nocturnal duel of the brothers (very naturally, and indeed, I think, inevitably arising), and second supposed death of the elder. Husband and wife now really make up, and then the cloven hoof appears. For the third supposed death and the manner of the third reappearance is steep ; steep, sir. It is even very steep, and I fear it shames the honest stuff so far ; but then it is highly pictorial, and it leads up to the death of the elder brother at the hands of the younger in a perfectly cold-blooded murder, of which I wish (and mean) the reader to approve. You see how daring is the design. There are really but six characters, and one of these episodic, and yet it covers eighteen years, and

will be, I imagine, the longest of my works.—Yours ever.

R. L. S.

Read Gosse's Raleigh. First-rate.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To the Rev. Dr. Charteris

Saranac Lake, Adirondacks,
New York, U.S.A. [*Spring*, 1888]

My dear Dr. Charteris,—The funeral letter, your notes, and many other things, are reserved for a book, *Memorials of a Scottish Family*, if ever I can find time and opportunity. I wish I could throw off all else and sit down to it to-day. Yes, my father was a "distinctly religious man," but not a pious. The distinction painfully and pleasurably recalls old conflicts; it used to be my great gun—and you, who suffered for the whole Church, know how needful it was to have some reserve artillery! His sentiments were tragic; he was a tragic thinker. Now, granted that life is tragic to the marrow, it seems the proper function of religion to make us accept and serve in that tragedy, as officers in that other and comparable one of war. Service is the word, active service, in the military sense; and the religious man—I beg pardon, the pious man—is he who has a military joy in duty—not he who weeps over the wounded. We can do no more than try to do our best. Really, I am the grandson of the manse—I preach you a kind of sermon. Box the brat's ears!

My mother—to pass to matters more within my competence—finely enjoys herself. The new country, some new friends we have made, the interesting experiment of the climate—which (at least) is tragic—all have done her good. I have myself passed a better winter than for years, and now that it is nearly over have some diffident hopes of doing well in the summer and "eating a little more air" than usual.

I thank you for the trouble you are taking, and my mother joins with me in kindest regards to yourself and Mrs. Charteris.—Yours very truly,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To S. R. CROCKETT

[*Saranac Lake, Spring*, 1888]

DEAR MINISTER OF THE FREE KIRK AT PENICUIK,—For O, man, I cannae read your name !—That I have been so long in answering your delightful letter sits on my conscience badly. The fact is I let my correspondence accumulate until I am going to leave a place ; and then I pitch in, overhaul the pile, and my cries of penitence might be heard a mile about. Yesterday I despatched thirty-five belated letters : conceive the state of my conscience, above all as the Sins of Omission (see boyhood's guide, the Shorter Catechism) are in my view the only serious ones ; I call it my view, but it cannot have escaped you that it was also Christ's. However, all that is not to the purpose, which is to thank you for the sincere pleasure afforded by your charming letter. I get a good few such ; how few that please me at all, you would be surprised to learn—or have a singularly just idea of the dulness of our race ; how few that please me as yours did, I can tell you in one word—*None*. I am no great kirkgoer, for many reasons—and the sermon's one of them, and the first prayer another, but the chief and effectual reason is the stuffiness. I am no great kirkgoer, says I, but when I read yon letter of yours, I thought I would like to sit under ye. And then I saw ye were to send me a bit buik, and says I, I'll wait for the bit buik, and then I'll mebbe can read the man's name, and anyway I'll can kill twa birds wi' ae stane. And, man, the buik was ne'er heard tell o' !

That fact is an adminicle of excuse for my delay.

And now, dear minister of the illegible name, thanks to you, and greeting to your wife, and may you have good

guidance in your difficult labours, and a blessing on your life.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

(No' just sae young's he was, though—
I'm awfae near forty, man.)

Address c/o Charles Scribner's Sons,
743 Broadway, New York.

Don't put " N.B." in your paper : put *Scotland*, and be done with it. Alas, that I should be thus stabbed in the home of my friends ! The name of my native land is not *North Britain*, whatever may be the name of yours.

R. L. S.

TO MISS FERRIER

[*Saranac Lake, April*, 1888]

MY DEAREST COGGIE,—I wish I could find the letter I began to you some time ago when I was ill ; but I can't and I don't believe there was much in it anyway. We have all behaved like pigs and beasts and barn-door poultry to you ; but I have been sunk in work, and the lad is lazy and blind and has been working too ; and as for Fanny, she has been (and still is) really unwell. I had a mean hope you might perhaps write again before I get up steam : I could not have been more ashamed of myself than I am, and I should have had another laugh.

They always say I cannot give news in my letters : I shall shake off that reproach. On Monday, if she is well enough, Fanny leaves for California to see her friends ; it is rather an anxiety to let her go alone ; but the doctor simply forbids it in my case, and she is better anywhere than here—a bleak, blackguard, beggarly climate, of which I can say no good except that it suits me and some others of the same or similar persuasions whom (by all rights) it ought to kill. It is a form of Arctic St. Andrews, I should imagine ; and the miseries of forty degrees below zero, with

a high wind, have to be felt to be appreciated. The greyness of the heavens here is a circumstance eminently revolting to the soul; I have near forgot the aspect of the sun—I doubt if this be news; it is certainly no news to us. My mother suffers a little from the inclemency of the place, but less on the whole than would be imagined. Among other wild schemes, we have been projecting yacht voyages; and I beg to inform you that Cogia Hassan was cast for the part of passenger. They may come off!—Again this is not news. The lad? Well, the lad wrote a tale this winter, which appeared to me so funny that I have taken it in hand, and some of these days you will receive a copy of a work entitled "*A Game of Bluff*, by Lloyd Osbourne and Robert Louis Stevenson."

Otherwise he (the lad) is much as usual. There remains, I believe, to be considered only R. L. S., the house-bond, prop, pillar, bread-winner, and bully of the establishment. Well, I do think him much better; he is making piles of money; the hope of being able to hire a yacht ere long dances before his eyes; otherwise he is not in very high spirits at this particular moment, though compared with last year at Bournemouth an angel of joy.

And now is this news, Cogia, or is it not? It all depends upon the point of view, and I call it news. The devil of it is that I can think of nothing else, except to send you all our loves, and to wish exceedingly you were here to cheer us all up. But we'll see about that on board the yacht.—Your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The Mutiny novel here foreshadowed never got written.

[*Saranac Lake*] *April 9th!!* 1888

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I have been long without writing to you, but am not to blame. I had some little annoyances quite for a private eye, but they ran me so hard that I could

not write without lugging them in, which (for several reasons) I did not choose to do. Fanny is off to San Francisco, and next week I myself flit to New York; address Scribner's. Where we shall go I know not, nor (I was going to say) care; so bald and bad is my frame of mind. Do you know our—ahem!—fellow clubman, Colonel Majendie? I had such an interesting letter from him. Did you see my sermon? It has evoked the worst feeling: I fear people don't care for the truth, or else I don't tell it. Suffer me to wander without purpose. I have sent off twenty letters to-day, and begun and stuck at a twenty-first, and taken a copy of one which was on business, and corrected several galleys of proof, and sorted about a bushel of old letters; so if anyone has a right to be romantically stupid it is I—and I am. Really deeply stupid, and at that stage when in old days I used to pour out words without any meaning whatever and with my mind taking no part in the performance. I suspect that is now the case. I am reading with extraordinary pleasure the life of Lord Lawrence: Lloyd and I have a mutiny novel—

(*Next morning, after twelve other letters*)—mutiny novel on hand—a tremendous work—so we are all at Indian books. The idea of the novel is Lloyd's: I call it a novel. 'Tis a tragic romance, of the most tragic sort: I believe the end will be almost too much for human endurance—when the hero is thrown to the ground with one of his own (Sepoy) soldier's knees upon his chest, and the cries begin in the Beebeeghar. O truly, you know it is a howler! The whole last part is—well the difficulty is that, short of resuscitating Shakespeare, I don't know who is to write it.

I still keep wonderful. I am a great performer before the Lord on the penny whistle.—Dear sir, sincerely yours,

ANDREW JACKSON.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

[*Saranac Lake, April,* 1888]
Address, c/o Messrs. Scribner's Sons,
743 *Broadway, N.Y.*

My dear Gamekeeper,—Your p.c. (proving you a good student of Micawber) has just arrived, and it paves the way to something I am anxious to say. I wrote a paper the other day—*Pulvis et Umbra ;*—I wrote it with great feeling and conviction : to me it seemed bracing and healthful, it is in such a world (so seen by me), that I am very glad to fight out my battle, and see some fine sunsets, and hear some excellent jests between whiles round the camp fire. But I find that to some people this vision of mine is a nightmare, and extinguishes all ground of faith in God or pleasure in man. Truth I think not so much of ; for I do not know it. And I could wish in my heart that I had not published this paper, if it troubles folk too much : all have not the same digestion, nor the same sight of things. And it came over me with special pain that perhaps this article (which I was at the pains to send to her) might give dismalness to my *Gamekeeper at Home*. Well, I cannot take back what I have said ; but yet I may add this. If my view be anything but the nonsense that it may be—to me it seems self-evident and blinding truth—surely of all things it makes this world holier. There is nothing in it but the moral side—but the great battle and the breathing times with their refreshments. I see no more and no less. And if you look again, it is not ugly, and it is filled with promise.

Pray excuse a desponding author for this apology. My wife is away off to the uttermost parts of the States, all by herself. I shall be off, I hope, in a week ; but where ? Ah ! that I know not. I keep wonderful, and my wife a little better, and the lad flourishing. We now perform duets on two D tin whistles ; it is no joke to make the bass ; I think I must really send you one, which I wish you would correct. . . . I may be said to live for these instrumental labours now, but I have always some childishness on hand.

—I am, dear Gamekeeper, your indulgent but intemperate Squire,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

[*Saranac Lake, Winter of* 1887-1888]

MY DEAREST FELLOW,—Doubts as to your movements have withheld me from really writing, and I do not know if you will get this. I was truly delighted to hear you had so good a time at Danville; I cannot tell you how pleased I was; and indeed, in the acuteness of that pleasure, I took your fainting fit easily. You see, I was afraid of more than illness for you. As for us we get on thoroughly well. Valentine and my mother go along most pleasantly; I do hope all is well in that quarter. Lloyd is really going ahead with his romance, after a fashion; I quite chortle over some of it; some of it of course is incredibly bad; and I do not know yet if he has the power to better it any for the press. I have written two of my papers, and have begun the third this morning. I keep very well and walk daily in the woods. The two first papers are quite good, I really believe; at least they are not dull, which is the great affair in such a task as I have undertaken. The first paper took five days; the second eight, and very hard and rather hopeless six of them were till light broke on the seventh morning, and the thread ran off the reel right merrily: but you see from that, it is a good job I did not take the weekly business. I have sent B—— forty dollars in the meanwhile; when you come we must discuss what is to be done. I will send some piano and violin music to your nephews; I wish I knew a little more about it, but I can send some just now. Good-bye, my dear fellow; you will soon be back now, and very glad we all will be to see you, and first of all—

Your
LOUIS.

To Sidney Colvin

Having spent the last fortnight of April at New York, Stevenson and his stepson moved at the beginning of May to the small New Jersey watering-place from whence the following few letters are dated: his wife having meanwhile gone to San Francisco, where she presently made arrangements for the Pacific yachting trip.

Union House, Manasquan, New Jersey [*May*, 1888]

My dear Colvin,—We are here at a delightful country inn, like a country French place, the only people in the house, a cat-boat at our disposal, the sea always audible on the outer beach, the lagoon as smooth as glass, all the little, queer, many coloured villas standing shuttered and empty; in front of ours, across the lagoon, two long wooden bridges; one for the rail, one for the road, sounding with intermittent traffic. It is highly pleasant, and a delightful change from Saranac. My health is much better for the change; I am sure I walked about four miles yesterday, one time with another—well, say three and a half; and the day before, I was out for four hours in the cat-boat, and was as stiff as a board in consequence. More letters call.—

Yours ever,
R. L. S.

To Mrs. R. L. Stevenson

The allusion here is to a quarrel in defence of his wife which had been fastened on him by one of his oldest friends and was never afterwards fully healed.

Manasquan, Spring, 1888

My dearest Girlie,—I have not written to you for some days: all my energies have gone in writing and destroying letters to ———; but I have now decided after two sleepless nights to do nothing. And if (as I believe they will) things take the worst course, simply to let "silence be the rest."

I see no other way out of it, either with health or dignity, and you may be sure I have not come to this hastily. I envy you flaming people who rage up so easily with hate; the days go, and this is the more dreadful to me. Excuse

my little bitterness with " flaming," it is a tap in return from my thousands, and I don't believe it, dearest. Enough that this is a dreadful misery, and I am surprised if any good come of it.

I enclose my letters and—I can write no more ; even that short reference to this affair has bowled me quite over.

Well, this is the next morning. I have slept and I wash my hands of these hobgoblin figures, once my friends, for just now. But indeed I find it hard to think or write of anything else ; and my work is at a stand. Not so my piping, which takes up hours of God's valuable time ; but there is nothing lost about that—you must prepare for the heavenly choir. Bandmann, my mother has told you about : a heavenly old gentleman, to be sure ; simple and gamesome as a child, wild as a boy of twenty, you would have lost your heart to him outright. I was really mashed ; so we all were ; even the judicious Lloyd was enthusiastic, always a refreshing sight in itself.

Love to Belle and her respected offspring. I trust your money has turned up. The bank was stupid about it, and I had to telegraph, but they then despatched it at once, so you should not have to wait long.

I have not had time to miss you ; when I am alone I think of nothing but the one affair. Say nothing of it to anyone, please. If things go to the worst, we must bear this in mere silence. I am, my dear,—Your

LOUIS.

Please say which of the enclosed you prefer—light or dark.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Since the date of the last letter Mrs. Stevenson at San Francisco had with her husband's sanction engaged the schooner yacht *Casco* for that cruise in the Pacific from which he was destined never to return.

Union House, Manasquan, N.J., but address to Scribner's, 11th May, 1888

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have found a yacht, and we are going the full pitch for seven months. If I cannot get my

health back (more or less), 'tis madness; but, of course, there is the hope, and I will play big. . . . If this business fails to set me up, well, £2000 is gone, and I know I can't get better. We sail from San Francisco, June 15th, for the South Seas in the yacht *Casco*.—With a million thanks for all your dear friendliness, ever yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO LADY TAYLOR

[*Manasquan, May*, 1888]

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I have to announce our great news. On June 15th we sail from San Francisco in the schooner yacht *Casco*, for a seven months' cruise in the South Seas. You can conceive what a state of excitement we are in; Lloyd perhaps first; but this is an old dream of mine which actually seems to be coming true, and I am sun-struck. It seems indeed too good to be true; and that we have not deserved so much good fortune. From Skerryvore to the Galapagos is a far cry! And from poking in a sick-room all winter to the deck of one's own ship, is indeed a heavenly change.

All these seven months I doubt if we can expect more than three mails at the best of it: and I do hope we may hear something of your news by each. I have no very clear views as to where the three addresses ought to be, but if you hear no later news, Charles Scribner's Sons will always have the run of our intended movements. And an early letter there would probably catch us at the Sandwich Islands. Tahiti will probably be the second point: and (as I roughly guess) Quito the third. But the whole future is invested with heavenly clouds.

I trust you are all well and content, and have good news of the Shelleys, to whom I wish you would pass on ours. They should be able to sympathise with our delight.

Now I have all my miserable Scribner articles to rake together in the inside of a fortnight: so you must not

expect me to be more copious. I have you all in the kindest memory, and am, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Remember me to Aubrey de Vere.

To MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

[*Manasquan, New Jersey, May,* 1888]

MY DEAREST FELLOW,—This will not reach you till some time after our wedding day, which as usual has taken me aback; but I mean to send you a despatch on the day itself, and this is for dessert. Not that I think so much of that day; if I had some other dates, I could think more of them; but of the day when I looked through the window,* or the day when I came to see you in Paris after the first absence, for example. But the marriage day we know, and it was a mighty good day too for me; for you, I wish I was sure. It would have been better, if my health had been so, that I do believe. The longer I go on, the more I think the worst of me is my health. "The longer you live the more you come to see the truth of the old adage ——." My dear, if I had the date of the day when you said that, I would think more of it, God bless you!

What is to be done about ——'s proposal to go with us? It would be an awful nuisance, I think; it is dreadful to have anybody but ourselves, and yet, of course, he has claims. Should we take him to the Sandwiches and leave him there to come back by packet? Do what you think best. If you think we ought, let's take him for better, for worse; but my heart repines at it.

Next day.

I meant to have gone on this morning, but have worked up to a late hour—and very well, and must finish and get out. God bless you, my dearest Fanny. I send you a kiss

* *I.e.* at Grez near Fontainebleau, and saw for the first time his wife that was to be.

and some letters, and the liveliest dog picture over which I have laughed till I can laugh no more.—Your

LOUIS.

To Homer St. Gaudens

The following is addressed from Manasquan to a boy, the son of the writer's friend the sculptor St. Gaudens; for the rest, it explains itself.

Manasquan, New Jersey, 27th May, 1888

DEAR HOMER ST. GAUDENS,—Your father has brought you this day to see me, and he tells me it is his hope you may remember the occasion. I am going to do what I can to carry out his wish; and it may amuse you, years after, to see this little scrap of paper and to read what I write. I must begin by testifying that you yourself took no interest whatever in the introduction, and in the most proper spirit displayed a single-minded ambition to get back to play, and this I thought an excellent and admirable point in your character. You were also (I use the past tense, with a view to the time when you shall read, rather than to that when I am writing) a very pretty boy, and (to my European views) startlingly self-possessed. My time of observation was so limited that you must pardon me if I can say no more: what else I marked, what restlessness of foot and hand, what graceful clumsiness, what experimental designs upon the furniture, was but the common inheritance of human youth. But you may perhaps like to know that the lean flushed man in bed, who interested you so little, was in a state of mind extremely mingled and unpleasant: harassed with work which he thought he was not doing well, troubled with difficulties to which you will in time succeed, and yet looking forward to no less a matter than a voyage to the South Seas and the visitation of savage and desert islands.—Your father's friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Henry James

Manasquan (ahem!), New Jersey, May 28th, 1888

My dear James,—With what a torrent it has come at last! Up to now, what I like best is the first number of *A London Life*. You have never done anything better, and I don't know if perhaps you have ever done anything so good as the girl's outburst: tip-top. I have been preaching your later works in your native land. I had to present the Beltraffio volume to Low, and it has brought him to his knees; he was *amazed* at the first part of Georgina's Reasons, although (like me) not so well satisfied with Part II. It is annoying to find the American public as stupid as the English, but they will waken up in time: I wonder what they will think of *Two Nations?* . . .

This, dear James, is a valedictory. On June 15th the schooner yacht *Casco* will (weather and a jealous providence permitting) steam through the Golden Gates for Honolulu, Tahiti, the Galapagos, Guayaquil, and—I hope *not* the bottom of the Pacific. It will contain your obedient 'umble servant and party. It seems too good to be true, and is a very good way of getting through the green-sickness of maturity which, with all its accompanying ills, is now declaring itself in my mind and life. They tell me it is not so severe as that of youth: if I (and the *Casco*) are spared, I shall tell you more exactly, as I am one of the few people in the world who do not forget their own lives.

Good-bye, then, my dear fellow, and please write us a word; we expect to have three mails in the next two months: Honolulu, Tahiti, and Guayaquil. But letters will be forwarded from Scribner's, if you hear nothing more definite directly. In 3 (three) days I leave for San Francisco.—Ever yours most cordially,

R. L. S.

X

PACIFIC VOYAGES

YACHT *CASCO*—SCHOONER *EQUATOR*—
S.S. *JANET NICOLL*

JUNE, 1888—OCTOBER, 1890

X

PACIFIC VOYAGES

IN the following section are printed nearly all the letters which reached Stevenson's correspondents in England and the United States, at intervals necessarily somewhat rare, during the eighteen months of his Pacific voyages. It was on the 28th of June, 1888, that he started from the harbour of San Francisco on what was only intended to be a health and pleasure excursion of a few months' duration, but turned into a voluntary exile prolonged until the hour of his death. His company consisted, besides himself, of his wife, his mother, his stepson Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, and the servant Valentine Roch. They sailed on board the schooner yacht *Casco*, Captain Otis, and made straight for the Marquesas, dropping anchor on the 28th of July in Anaho Bay, the harbour of the island of Nukahiva. The magic effect of this first island landfall on his mind he has described in the opening chapter of his book, *The South Seas*. After spending six weeks in this group they sailed south-eastwards, visiting (a sufficiently perilous piece of navigation) several of the coral atolls of the Paumotus or Low Archipelago. Thence they arrived in the first week of October at the Tahitian group or Society Islands. In these their longest stay was not at the chief town, Papeete, where Stevenson fell sharply ill, but in a more secluded and very beautiful station, Tautira, whither he went to recruit, and where they were detained by the necessity of re-masting the schooner. Here Stevenson and one of the local chiefs, Ori a Ori, made special friends and parted with heartfelt mutual regret. Mrs. Stevenson is good enough to allow me to supplement the somewhat frag-

mentary account of these adventures given in his letters with one or two of her own, in which they are told with full vividness and detail.

Sailing from Tahiti due northwards through forty degrees of latitude, the party arrived about Christmas at Honolulu, the more than semi-civilised capital of the Hawaiian group (Sandwich Islands), where they paid off the yacht *Casco* and made a stay of nearly six months. Here Stevenson finished *The Master of Ballantrae* and *The Wrong Box ;* and hence his mother returned for a while to Scotland, to join her son's household when it was fairly installed two years later at Vailima. From Honolulu Stevenson made several excursions, including one, which profoundly impressed him, to the leper settlement at Molokai, the scene of Father Damien's ministrations and death.

This first year of cruising and residence among the Pacific islands had resulted in so encouraging a renewal of health, with so keen a zest added to life by the restored capacity for outdoor activity and adventure, that Stevenson determined to prolong his experiences in yet more remote archipelagoes of the same ocean. He started accordingly from Honolulu in June, 1889, on a trading schooner, the *Equator*, bound to the Gilberts, one of the least visited and most primitively mannered of all the island groups of the Western Pacific ; emerged towards Christmas of the same year into semi-civilisation again at Apia, on the island of Upolu in Samoa, where he wrote his first Polyneasian story, *The Bottle Imp*. Enchanted with the scenery and the people, he stayed for six weeks, first in the house of Mr. H. J. Moors, a leading American trader, then with his family in a separate cottage not far off ; bought an estate on the densely wooded mountain side above Apia, with the notion of making there, if not a home, at least a place of rest and call on later projected excursions among the islands ; and began to make collections for his studies in recent Samoan history. In February he went on to Sydney to find his correspondence and consider future plans. It was during this stay at Sydney that he was moved to give

expression to his righteous indignation at the terms of a letter concerning Father Damien by the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu. Here also he fell once more seriously ill, with a renewal of all his old symptoms ; and the conclusion was forced upon him that he must take up his residence for the rest of his life in the tropics—though with occasional excursions, as he then hoped, at least half-way homeward to places where it might be possible for friends from England to meet him. In order to shake off the effects of this attack, he started with his party on a fresh sea voyage from Sydney, this time on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a very devious course to the Gilberts again, the Marshalls, and among many other remote islands during the months of April–August, 1890. During the voyage he began to put into shape the notes for a volume on the South Seas which he had been compiling ever since he left San Francisco. Unfortunately, he persisted in the endeavour to make his work impersonal and full of information, or what he called " serious interest " exactly in the manner which his wife had foreseen before they left Honolulu, and from which she had wisely tried to dissuade him (see her letter printed on p. 253 foll.). On the return voyage Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* to land in New Caledonia, staying for some days at Noumea before he went on to Sydney, where he spent four or five weeks of later August and September. Thence he returned in October to take up his abode for good on his Samoan property, where the work of clearing, planting, and building a habitable cottage had been going on busily during his absence.

To Sidney Colvin

It should be remembered that the Marquesas, the Paumotus, and the Tahitian group are all dependencies of France.

Yacht Casco, *Anaho Bay, Nukahiva, Marquesas Islands* [*July*, 1888]

My dear Colvin,—From this somewhat (ahem) out of the way place, I write to say how d'ye do. It is all a swindle: I chose these isles as having the most beastly population, and they are far better, and far more civilised than we. I know one old chief Ko-o-amua, a great cannibal in his day, who ate his enemies even as he walked home from killing 'em, and he is a perfect gentleman and exceedingly amiable and simple-minded: no fool, though.

The climate is delightful; and the harbour where we lie one of the loveliest spots imaginable. Yesterday evening we had near a score natives on board; lovely parties. We have a native god; very rare now. Very rare and equally absurd to view.

This sort of work is not favourable to correspondence: it takes me all the little strength I have to go about and see, and then come home and note, the strangeness around us. I shouldn't wonder if there came trouble here some day, all the same. I could name a nation that is not beloved in certain islands—and it does not know it! Strange: like ourselves, perhaps, in India! Love to all and much to yourself.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Yacht Casco, *at sea, near the Paumotus,*
7 A.M., *September 6th*, 1888, *with a dreadful pen*

My dear Charles,—Last night as I lay under my blanket in the cockpit, courting sleep, I had a comic seizure. There was nothing visible but the southern stars, and the steersman there out by the binnacle lamp; we were all looking forward to a most deplorable landfall on the morrow,

praying God we should fetch a tuft of palms which are to indicate the Dangerous Archipelago; the night was as warm as milk, and all of a sudden I had a vision of—Drummond Street. It came on me like a flash of lightning: I simply returned thither, and into the past. And when I remember all I hoped and feared as I pickled about Rutherford's in the rain and the east wind; how I feared I should make a mere shipwreck, and yet timidly hoped not; how I feared I should never have a friend, far less a wife, and yet passionately hoped I might; how I hoped (if I did not take to drink) I should possibly write one little book, etc., etc. And then now—what a change! I feel somehow as if I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down. And I felt I must write one word to you. Excuse me if I write little: when I am at sea, it gives me a headache; when I am in port, I have my diary crying "Give, give." I shall have a fine book of travels, I feel sure; and will tell you more of the South Seas after very few months than any other writer has done—except Herman Melville perhaps, who is a howling cheese. Good luck to you, God bless you.—Your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The signature used at foot of this letter and occasionally elsewhere, "The Old Man Virulent," alludes to the fits of uncontrollable anger to which he was often in youth, but by this time hardly ever, subject: fits occasioned sometimes by instances of official stolidity or impertinence or what he took for such, more often by acts savouring of cruelty, meanness, or injustice.

Fakarava, Low Archipelago, September 21st, 1888

My dear Colvin,—Only a word. Get out your big atlas, and imagine a straight line from San Francisco to Anaho, the N.E. corner of Nukahiva, one of the Marquesas Islands; imagine three weeks there: imagine a day's sail

on August 12th round the eastern end of the island to Tai-o-hae, the capital; imagine us there till August 22nd: imagine us skirt the east side of Ua-pu—perhaps Rona-Poa on your atlas—and through the Bondelais Straits to Taakauku in Hiva-Oa, where we arrive on the 23rd; imagine us there until September 4th, when we sailed for Fakarava, which we reached on the 9th, after a very difficult and dangerous passage among these isles. Tuesday, we shall leave for Taiti, where I shall knock off and do some necessary work ashore. It looks pretty bald in the atlas; not in fact; nor I trust in the 130 odd pages of diary which I have just been looking up for these dates: the interest, indeed, has been *incredible*: I did not dream there were such places or such races. My health has stood me splendidly; I am in for hours wading over the knees for shells; I have been five hours on horseback: I have been up pretty near all night waiting to see where the *Casco* would go ashore, and with my diary all ready—simply the most entertaining night of my life. Withal I still have colds; I have one now, and feel pretty sick too; but not as at home: instead of being in bed, for instance, I am at this moment sitting snuffling and writing in an undershirt and trousers; and as for colour, hands, arms, feet, legs, and face, I am browner than the berry: only my trunk and the aristocratic spot on which I sit retain the vile whiteness of the north.

Please give my news and kind love to Henley, Henry James, and any whom you see of wellwishers. Accept from me the very best of my affection: and believe me ever yours,

THE OLD MAN VIRULENT.

Papeete, Taiti, October 7th, 1888

Never having found a chance to send this off, I may add more of my news. My cold took a very bad turn, and I am pretty much out of sorts at this particular, living in a little bare one-twentieth-furnished house, surrounded by mangoes, etc. All the rest are well, and I mean to be soon.

But these Taiti colds are very severe and, to children, often fatal; so they were not the thing for me. Yesterday the brigantine came in from San Francisco, so we can get our letters off soon. There are in Papeete at this moment, in a little wooden house with grated verandahs, two people who love you very much, and one of them is

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Taiti, as ever was, 6th October, 1888

MY DEAR CHARLES,—. . . You will receive a lot of mostly very bad proofs of photographs: the paper was so bad. Please keep them very private, as they are for the book. We send them, having learned so dread a fear of the sea, that we wish to put our eggs in different baskets. We have been thrice within an ace of being ashore: we were lost (!) for about twelve hours in the Low Archipelago, but by God's blessing had quiet weather all the time; and once, in a squall, we cam' so near gaun heels ower hurdies, that I really dinnae ken why we didnae a'thegither. Hence, as I say, a great desire to put our eggs in different baskets, particularly on the Pacific (aw-haw-haw) Pacific Ocean.

You can have no idea what a mean time we have had, owing to incidental beastlinesses, nor what a glorious, owing to the intrinsic interest of these isles. I hope the book will be a good one; nor do I really very much doubt that—the stuff is so curious; what I wonder is, if the public will rise to it. A copy of my journal, or as much of it as is made, shall go to you also; it is, of course, quite imperfect, much being to be added and corrected; but O, for the eggs in the different baskets.

All the rest are well enough, and all have enjoyed the cruise so far, in spite of its drawbacks. We have had an awfae time in some ways, Mr. Baxter; and if I wasnae sic a verra patient man (when I ken that I *have* to be) there wad hae been a braw row, and ance if I hadnae happened to be on deck about three in the marnin', I *think* there would

have been *murder* done. The American Mairchant Marine is a kent service; ye'll have heard its praise, I'm thinkin'; an' if ye never did, ye can get *Twa Years Before the Mast*, by Dana, whaur forbye a great deal o' pleisure, ye'll get a' the needcessary information. Love to your father and all the family.—Ever your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MISS ADELAIDE BOODLE

This lady, as we have seen, had made Stevenson a present of a paper-cutter when he left Bournemouth; and it is in the character of the paper-cutter that he now writes.

Taiti, October 10th, 1888

DEAR GIVER,—I am at a loss to conceive your object in giving me to a person so locomotory as my proprietor. The number of thousand miles that I have travelled, the strange bed-fellows with which I have been made acquainted, I lack the requisite literary talent to make clear to your imagination. I speak of bed-fellows; pocket-fellows would be a more exact expression, for the place of my abode is in my master's right-hand trouser-pocket; and there, as he waded on the resounding beaches of Nukahiva, or in the shallow tepid water on the reef of Fakarava, I have been overwhelmed by and buried among all manner of abominable South Sea shells, beautiful enough in their way, I make no doubt, but singular company for any self-respecting paper-cutter. He, my master —or as I more justly call him, my bearer; for although I occasionally serve him, does not he serve me daily and all day long, carrying me like an African potentate on my subject's legs?—*he* is delighted with these isles, and this climate, and these savages, and a variety of other things. He now blows a flageolet with singular effects: sometimes the poor thing appears stifled with shame, sometimes it screams with agony; he pursues his career with truculent insensibility. Health appears to reign in the party. I was very nearly sunk in a squall. I am sorry I ever left England, for here there are no books to be had, and with-

out books there is no stable situation for, dear Giver, your affectionate

WOODEN PAPER-CUTTER.

A neighbouring pair of scissors snips a kiss in your direction.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

The ballad referred to in the letter which follows is the *Feast of Famine*, published with others in the collection of 1890; *Ballads* (Chatto & Windus). I never very much admired his South Sea ballads for any quality except their narrative vigour, thinking them unequal and uncertain both in metre and style.

Taiti, October 16th, 1888

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The cruiser for San Francisco departs to-morrow morning bearing you some kind of a scratch. This much more important packet will travel by way of Auckland. It contains a ballant; and I think a better ballant than I expected ever to do. I can imagine how you will wag your pow over it; and how ragged you will find it, etc., but has it not spirit all the same? and though the verse is not all your fancy painted it, has it not some life? And surely, as narrative, the thing has considerable merit! Read it, get a typewritten copy taken, and send me that and your opinion to the Sandwiches. I know I am only courting the most excruciating mortification; but the real cause of my sending the thing is that I could bear to go down myself, but not to have much MS. go down with me. To say truth, we are through the most dangerous; but it has left in all minds a strong sense of insecurity, and we are all for putting eggs in various baskets.

We leave here soon, bound for Uahiva, Raiatea, Bora-Bora, and the Sandwiches.

O, how my spirit languishes
To step ashore on the Sanguishes;
For there my letters wait,
There shall I know my fate.
O, how my spirit languidges
To step ashore on the Sanguidges.

18*th*.—I think we shall leave here if all is well on Monday. I am quite recovered, astonishingly recovered. It must be owned these climates and this voyage have given me more strength than I could have thought possible. And yet the sea is a terrible place, stupefying to the mind and poisonous to the temper, the sea, the motion, the lack of space, the cruel publicity, the villainous tinned foods, the sailors, the captain, the passengers—but you are amply repaid when you sight an island, and drop anchor in a new world. Much trouble has attended this trip, but I must confess more pleasure. Nor should I ever complain, as in the last few weeks, with the curing of my illness indeed, as if that were the bursting of an abscess, the cloud has risen from my spirits and to some degree from my temper. Do you know what they called the *Casco* at Fakarava? The *Silver Ship*. Is that not pretty? Pray tell Mrs. Jenkin, *die silberne Frau*, as I only learned it since I wrote her. I think of calling the book by that name: *The Cruise of the Silver Ship*—so there will be one poetic page at least—the title. At the Sandwiches we shall say farewell to the *S. S.* with mingled feelings. She is a lovely creature: the most beautiful thing at this moment in Taiti.

Well, I will take another sheet, though I know I have nothing to say. You would think I was bursting; but the voyage is all stored up for the book, which is to pay for it, we fondly hope; and the troubles of the time are not worth telling; and our news is little.

Here I conclude (Oct. 24th, I think), for we are now stored, and the Blue Peter metaphorically flies.

To William and Thomas Archer

Stevenson addresses a part of this letter, as well as the whole of another later on, to a young son of Mr. Archer's, but rather to amuse himself than his nominal correspondent, who was then aged three.

Taiti, October 17th, 1888

Dear Archer,—Though quite unable to write letters, I nobly send you a line signifying nothing. The voyage has

agreed well with all; it has had its pains, and its extraordinary pleasures; nothing in the world can equal the excitement of the first time you cast anchor in some bay of a tropical island, and the boats begin to surround you, and the tattooed people swarm aboard. Tell Tomarcher, with my respex, that hide-and-seek is not equal to it; no, nor hidee-in-the-dark; which, for the matter of that, is a game for the unskilful: the artist prefers daylight, a good-sized garden, some shrubbery, an open paddock, and—come on, Macduff.

TOMARCHER, I am now a distinguished littery-tour, but that was not the real bent of my genius. I was the best player of hide-and-seek going; not a good runner, I was up to every shift and dodge, I could jink very well, I could crawl without any noise through leaves, I could hide under a carrot plant, it used to be my favourite boast that I always *walked* into the den. You may care to hear, Tomarcher, about the children in these parts; their parents obey them, they do not obey their parents; and I am sorry to tell you (for I daresay you are already thinking the idea a good one) that it does not pay one half-penny. There are three sorts of civilisation, Tomarcher: the real old-fashioned one, in which children either had to find out how to please their dear papas or their dear papas cut their heads off. This style did very well, but is now out of fashion. Then the modern European style: in which children have to behave reasonably well, and go to school and say their prayers, or their dear papas *will know the reason why*. This does fairly well. Then there is the South Sea Island plan, which does not do one bit. The children beat their parents here; it does not make their parents any better; so do not try it.

Dear Tomarcher, I have forgotten the address of your new house, but will send this to one of your papa's publishers. Remember us all to all of you, and believe me, yours respectably.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Charles Baxter

Tautira (*The Garden of the World*), *otherwise called Hans-Christian-Andersen-ville* [*November*, 1888]

My dear Charles,—Whether I have a penny left in the wide world, I know not, nor shall know, till I get to Honolulu, where I anticipate a devil of an awakening. It will be from a mighty pleasant dream at least: Tautira being mere Heaven. But suppose, for the sake of argument, any money to be left in the hands of my painful doer, what is to be done with it? Save us from exile would be the wise man's choice, I suppose; for the exile threatens to be eternal. But yet I am of opinion—in case there should be *some* dibbs in the hand of the P. D., *i.e.* painful doer; because if there be none, I shall take to my flageolet on the high-road, and work home the best way I can, having previously made away with my family—I am of opinion that if —— and his are in the customary state, and you are thinking of an offering, and there should be still some funds over, you would be a real good P. D. to put some in with yours and tak' the credit o't, like a wee man! I know it's a beastly thing to ask; but it, after all, does no earthly harm, only that much good. And besides, like enough there's nothing in the till, and there is an end. Yet I live here in the full lustre of millions; it is thought I am the richest son of man that has yet been to Tautira: I!—and I am secretly eaten with the fear of lying in pawn, perhaps for the remainder of my days, in San Francisco. As usual, my colds have much hashed my finances.

Do tell Henley I write this just after having dismissed Ori the sub-chief, in whose house I live, Mrs. Ori, and Pairai, their adopted child, from the evening hour of music: during which I Publickly (with a k) Blow on the Flageolet. These are words of truth. Yesterday I told Ori about W. E. H., counterfeited his playing on the piano and the pipe, and succeeded in sending the six feet four there is of that sub-chief somewhat sadly to his bed; feeling that his

was not the genuine article after all. Ori is exactly like a colonel in the Guards.—I am, dear Charles, ever yours affectionately,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The stanzas which end this letter are well known, having been printed, with one additional, in *Songs of Travel;* but they gain effect, I think, from being given here in their place.

Tautira, 10th November, '88

My dear Charles,—Our mainmast is dry-rotten, and we are all to the devil; I shall lie in a debtor's jail. Never mind, Tautira is first chop. I am so besotted that I shall put on the back of this my attempt at words to Wandering Willie; if you can conceive at all the difficulty, you will also conceive the vanity with which I regard any kind of result; and whatever mine is like, it has some sense, and Burns's has none.

Home no more home to me, whither must I wander?
Hunger my driver, I go where I must.
Cold blows the winter wind over hill and heather;
Thick drives the rain, and my roof is in the dust.
Loved of wise men was the shade of my roof-tree;
The true word of welcome was spoken in the door—
Dear days of old, with the faces in the firelight,
Kind folks of old, you come again no more.

Home was home then, my dear, full of kindly faces,
Home was home then, my dear, happy for the child.
Fire and the windows bright glittered on the moorland;
Song, tuneful song, built a palace in the wild.
Now, when day dawns on the brow of the moorland,
Lone stands the house, and the chimney-stone is cold.
Lone let it stand, now the friends are all departed,
The kind hearts, the true hearts, that loved the place of old.

R. L. S.

To John Addington Symonds

The following is the draft of a proposed dedication to the South Sea travel-book which was to be the fruit of the present voyages, as is explained in a note at the end.

November 11th, 1888

One November night, in the village of Tautira, we sat at the high table in the hall of assembly, hearing the natives sing. It was dark in the hall, and very warm ; though at times the land wind blew a little shrewdly through the chinks, and at times, through the larger openings, we could see the moonlight on the lawn. As the songs arose in the rattling Tahitian chorus, the chief translated here and there a verse. Farther on in the volume you shall read the songs themselves ; and I am in hopes that not you only, but all who can find a savour in the ancient poetry of places, will read them with some pleasure. You are to conceive us, therefore, in strange circumstances and very pleasing ; in a strange land and climate, the most beautiful on earth ; surrounded by a foreign race that all travellers have agreed to be the most engaging ; and taking a double interest in two foreign arts.

We came forth again at last, in a cloudy moonlight, on the forest lawn which is the street of Tautira. The Pacific roared outside upon the reef. Here and there one of the scattered palm-built lodges shone out under the shadow of the wood, the lamplight bursting through the crannies of the wall. We went homeward slowly, Ori a Ori carrying behind us the lantern and the chairs, properties with which we had just been enacting our part of the distinguished visitor. It was one of those moments in which minds not altogether churlish recall the names and deplore the absence of congenial friends ; and it was your name that first rose upon our lips. " How Symonds would have enjoyed this evening ! " said one, and then another. The word caught in my mind ; I went to bed and it was still there. The glittering, frosty solitudes in which your days are cast arose before me : I seemed to see you walking there in the late night, under the pine-trees and the stars ; and I received the image with something like remorse.

There is a modern attitude towards Fortune ; in this place

I will not use a graver name. Staunchly to withstand her buffets and to enjoy with equanimity her favours was the code of the virtuous of old. Our fathers, it should seem, wondered and doubted how they had merited their misfortunes : we, rather how we have deserved our happiness. And we stand often abashed, and sometimes revolted, at those partialities of fate by which we profit most. It was so with me on that November night : I felt that our positions should be changed. It was you, dear Symonds, who should have gone upon that voyage and written this account. With your rich stores of knowledge, you could have remarked and understood a thousand things of interest and beauty that escaped my ignorance ; and the brilliant colours of your style would have carried into a thousand sick-rooms the sea air and the strong sun of tropic islands. It was otherwise decreed. But suffer me at least to connect you, if only in name and only in the fondness of imagination, with the voyage of the Silver Ship.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

DEAR SYMONDS,—I send you this (November 11th) the morning of its completion. If I ever write an account of this voyage, may I place this letter at the beginning? It represents—I need not tell you, for you too are an artist—a most genuine feeling, which kept me long awake last night; and though perhaps a little elaborate, I think it a good piece of writing. We are *in heaven here*. Do not forget.

R. L. S.

Please keep this : I have no perfect copy.
Tautira, on the peninsula of Taiti.

TO THOMAS ARCHER

Tautira, Island of Taiti [*November*, 1888]

DEAR TOMARCHER,—This is a pretty state of things! seven o'clock and no word of breakfast! And I was awake a good deal last night, for it was full moon, and they had

made a great fire of cocoa-nut husks down by the sea, and as we have no blinds or shutters, this kept my room very bright. And then the rats had a wedding or a school-feast under my bed. And then I woke early, and I have nothing to read except Virgil's *Æneid*, which is not good fun on an empty stomach, and a Latin dictionary, which is good for naught, and by some humorous accident, your dear papa's article on Skerryvore. And I read the whole of that, and very impudent it is, but you must not tell your dear papa I said so, or it might come to a battle in which you might lose either a dear papa or a valued correspondent, or both, which would be prodigal. And still no breakfast; so I said "Let's write to Tomarcher."

This is a much better place for children than any I have hitherto seen in these seas. The girls (and sometimes the boys) play a very elaborate kind of hopscotch. The boys play horses exactly as we do in Europe; and have very good fun on stilts, trying to knock each other down, in which they do not often succeed. The children of all ages go to church and are allowed to do what they please, running about the aisles, rolling balls, stealing mamma's bonnet and publicly sitting on it, and at last going to sleep in the middle of the floor. I forgot to say that the whips to play horses, and the balls to roll about the church—at least I never saw them used elsewhere—grow ready made on trees; which is rough on toy-shops. The whips are so good that I wanted to play horses myself; but no such luck! my hair is grey, and I am a great, big, ugly man. The balls are rather hard, but very light and quite round. When you grow up and become offensively rich, you can charter a ship in the port of London, and have it come back to you entirely loaded with these balls; when you could satisfy your mind as to their character, and give them away when done with to your uncles and aunts. But what I really wanted to tell you was this: besides the tree-top toys (Hush-a-by, toy-shop, on the tree-top!), I have seen some real *made* toys, the first hitherto observed in the South Seas.

This was how. You are to imagine a four-wheeled gig; one horse; in the front seat two Tahiti natives, in their

Sunday clothes, blue coat, white shirt, kilt (a little longer than the Scotch) of a blue stuff with big white or yellow flowers, legs and feet bare; in the back seat me and my wife, who is a friend of yours; under our feet, plenty of lunch and things: among us a great deal of fun in broken Tahitian, one of the natives, the sub-chief of the village, being a great ally of mine. Indeed we have exchanged names; so that he is now called Rui, the nearest they can come to Louis, for they have no *l* and no *s* in their language. Rui is six feet three in his stockings, and a magnificent man. We all have straw hats, for the sun is strong. We drive between the sea, which makes a great noise, and the mountains; the road is cut through a forest mostly of fruit trees, the very creepers, which take the place of our ivy, heavy with a great and delicious fruit, bigger than your head and far nicer, called Barbedine. Presently we came to a house in a pretty garden, quite by itself, very nicely kept, the doors and windows open, no one about, and no noise but that of the sea. It looked like a house in a fairy-tale, and just beyond we must ford a river, and there we saw the inhabitants. Just in the mouth of the river, where it met the sea waves, they were ducking and bathing and screaming together like a covey of birds: seven or eight little naked brown boys and girls as happy as the day was long: and on the banks of the stream beside them real toys—toy ships, full rigged, and with their sails set, though they were lying in the dust on their beam ends. And then I knew for sure they were all children in a fairy-story, living alone together in that lonely house with the only toys in all the island; and that I had myself driven, in my four-wheeled gig, into a corner of the fairy-story, and the question was should I get out again? But it was all right; I guess only one of the wheels of the gig had got into the fairy-story; and the next jolt the whole thing vanished, and we drove on in our seaside forest as before, and I have the honour to be Tomarcher's valued correspondent, TERIITERA, which he was previously known as

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson to Sidney Colvin

This letter from Mrs. Stevenson serves to fill out and explain allusions in the three or four preceding. The beautiful brown princess is Princess Moë, ex-queen of Raiatea, well known to readers of Pierre Loti and Miss Gordon Cumming. The move away from Papeete, where Stevenson had fallen seriously ill, had been made in hopes of finding on the island a climate that would suit him better.

Tautira, Tahiti, Dec. 4th [1888]

Dear, long neglected, though never forgotten Custodian, I write you from fairyland, where we are living in a fairy-story, the guests of a beautiful brown princess. We came to stay a week, five weeks have passed, and we are still indefinite as to our time of leaving. It was chance brought us here, for no one in Papeete could tell us a word about this part of the island except that it was very fine to look at, and inhabited by wild people—" almost as wild as the people of Anaho ! " That touch about the people of Anaho inclined our hearts this way, so we finally concluded to take a look at the other side of Tahiti. The place of our landing was windy, uninhabited except by mosquitoes, and Louis was ill. The first day Lloyd and the Captain made an exploration, but came back disgusted. They had found a Chinaman, a long way off, who seemed to have some horses, but no desire to hire them to strangers, and they had found nothing else whatever. The next morning I took Valentine and went on a prospecting tour of my own. I found the Chinaman, persuaded him to let me have two horses and a wagon, and went back for the rest of my family. When asked where I wished to go, I could only say to the largest native village and the most wild. Ill as Louis was, I brought him the next day, and shall never cease to be thankful for my courage, for he has gained health and strength every day. He takes sea baths and swims, and lives almost entirely in the open air as nearly without clothes as possible, a simple pyjama suit of striped light flannel his only dress. As to shoes and stockings we all have scorned them for months except Mrs. Stevenson, who often goes barefoot and never, I believe, wears stock-

ings. Lloyd's costume, in which he looks remarkably well, consists of a striped flannel shirt and a pareu. The pareu is no more or less than a large figured blue and white cotton window curtain twisted about the waist, and hanging a little below the bare knees. Both Louis and Lloyd wear wreaths of artificial flowers, made of the dried pandanus leaf, on their hats.

Moë has gone to Papeete by the command of the king, whose letter was addressed "To the great Princess at Tautira. P. V." P. V. stands for Pomaré 5th. Every evening, before she went, we played Van John lying in a circle on pillows in the middle of the floor with our heads together: and hardly an evening passed but it struck us afresh how very much you would like Moë, and we told her of you again. The house (really here a palace) in which we live, belongs to the sub-chief, Ori, a subject and relation of the Princess. He, and his whole family, consisting of his wife, his two little adopted sons, his daughter and her two young babies, turned out to live in a little bird-cage hut of one room. Ori is the very finest specimen of a native we have seen yet; he is several inches over six feet, of perfect though almost gigantic proportions, and looks more like a Roman Emperor in bronze than words can express. One day, when Moë gave a feast, it being the correct thing to do, we all wore wreaths of golden yellow leaves on our heads; when Ori walked in and sat down at the table, as with one voice we all cried out in admiration. His manners and I might say his habit of thought are English. In some ways, he is so like a Colonel of the Guards that we often call him Colonel. It was either the day before, or the morning of our public feast, that Louis asked the Princess if she thought Ori would accept his name. She was sure of it, and much pleased at the idea. I wish you could have seen Louis, blushing like a schoolgirl, when Ori came in, and the brotherhood was offered. So now if you please, Louis is no more Louis, having given that name away in the Tahitian form of *Rui*, but is known as *Terii-Tera* (pronounced Tereeterah) that being Ori's Christian name. "Ori of Ori" is his clan name.

Let me tell you of our village feast. The chief, who was our guide in the matter, found four large fat hogs, which Louis bought, and four cases of ship's biscuit were sent over from the *Casco*, which is lying at Papeete for repairs. Our feast cost in all about eighty dollars. Every Sunday all things of public interest are announced in the Farehau (an enormous public bird cage) and the news of the week read aloud from the Papeete journal, if it happens to turn up. Our feast was given on a Wednesday, and was announced by the chief the Sunday before, who referred to Louis as "the rich one." Our hogs were killed in the morning, washed in the sea, and roasted whole in a pit with hot stones. When done they were laid on their stomachs in neat open coffins of green basket work, each hog with his case of biscuits beside him. Early in the morning the entire population began bathing, a bath being the preliminary to everything. At about three o'clock—four was the hour set—there was a general movement towards our premises, so that I had to hurry Louis into his clothes, all white, even to his shoes. Lloyd was also in white, but barefoot. I was not prepared, so had to appear in a red and white muslin gown, also barefoot. As Mrs. Stevenson had had a feast of her own, conducted on religious principles, she kept a little in the background, so that her dress did not matter so much. The chief, who speaks French very well, stood beside Louis to interpret for him. By the time we had taken our respective places on the verandah in front of our door, an immense crowd had assembled. They came in five, instead of four detachments which was what the chief expected, and he was a little confused at first, as he and Louis had been arranging a speech to four sets of people, which ran in this order. The clergyman at the head of the Protestants: the chief, council, and irreligious:—one of the council at their head. The schoolmaster with the school-children: the catechist and the Catholics: but there was another very small sect, by some strange mischance called Mormons, which it was supposed would be broken up and swallowed by the others. But no, the Mormons came in a body alone, marshalled by

the best and wittiest speaker—bar Rui—in Tautira. Each set of people came bending under the weight of bamboo poles laden with fruits, pigs, fowls, etc. All were dressed in their gayest pareus, and many had wreaths of leaves or flowers on their heads. The prettiest sight of all was the children, who came marching two and two abreast, the bamboo poles lying lengthwise across their shoulders.

When all the offerings had been piled in five great heaps upon the ground, Louis made his oration to the accompaniment of the squealing of pigs, the cackling of hens, and the roar of the surf which beats man-high upon the roof. A speech was made in return on behalf of the village, and then each section sent forth its orator, the speeches following in the order I have given above. Each speaker finished by coming forward with one of the smaller things in his hand, which he offered personally to Louis, and then shook hands with us all and retired. Among these smaller presents were many fish-hooks for large fishing, laboriously carved from mother-of-pearl shell. One man came with one egg in each hand saying, "carry these to Scotland with you, let them hatch into cocks, and their song shall remind you of Tautira." The schoolmaster, with a leaf-basket of rose apples, made his speech in French. Somehow the whole effect of the scene was like a story out of the Bible, and I am not ashamed that Louis and I both shed tears when we saw the enchanting procession of school-children. The Catholic priest, Father Bruno, a great friend of ours, said that for the next fifty years the time of the feast of the rich one will be talked of: which reminds me of our friend Donat, of Fakarava, who was temporary resident at the time we were there. "I am so glad," he said, "that the *Casco* came in just now, otherwise I should be forgotten: but now the people will always say this or that happened so long before—or so long after—the coming of the *Silver Ship*, when Donat represented the government."

In front of our house is a broad stretch of grass, dotted with cocoanuts, breadfruits, mangoes, and the strange pandanus tree. I wish you could have seen them, their lower branches glowing with the rich colours of the fruits

hung upon them by Ori and his men, and great heaps lying piled against their roots, on the evening of our feast. From the bamboo poles that they were carried upon, a pen was made for the ten pigs, and a fowl house for the twenty-three fowls that were among the presents. But there was a day of reckoning at hand. Time after time we ran down to the beach to look for the *Casco*, until we were in despair. For over a month we had lived in Ori's house, causing him infinite trouble and annoyance, and not even his, at that. Areia (the chief—means the Prince) went to Papeete and came back with a letter to say that more work had to be done upon the *Casco*, and it might be any time before she could get to Tautira. We had used up all our stores, and had only a few dollars of money left in Tautira, and not very much in Papeete. Could we stand the journey to Papeete, we could not live upon the yacht in the midst of the workmen, and we had not money enough left to live at an hotel. We were playing cards on the floor, as usual, when this message came, and you can imagine its effect. I knew perfectly well that Rui would force us to stay on with him, but what depressed me the most of all, was the fact of Louis having made brothers with him just before this took place. Had there been a shadow of doubt on our dear Rui's face, I should have fled from before him. Sitting there on the floor waiting for him was too much for my nerves and I burst into tears, upon which the princess wept bitterly. In the meantime the priest had dropped in, so that we had him and Moë, and Areia, as witnesses to our humiliating position. First came Madame Rui, who heard the story, and sat down on the floor in silence, which was very damping for a beginning, and then Ori of Ori, the magnificent, who listened to the tale of the shipwrecked mariners with serious dignity, asking one or two questions, and then spoke to this effect. "You are my brother: all that I have is yours. I know that your food is done, but I can give you plenty of fish and taro. We like you, and wish to have you here. Stay where you are till the *Casco* comes. Be happy—*et ne pleurez pas.*" Louis dropped his head into his hands and wept, and then we all went up to

Rui and shook hands with him and accepted his offer. Madame Rui, who had been silent only as a dutiful wife, that her husband might speak first, poured forth manifold reasons for our staying on as long as we could possibly manage. During all this scene, an attendant of the princess had been sitting on the floor behind us, a baby in his arms, where he had ensconced himself for the purpose of watching the game. He understood nothing of what was going on; we wondered afterwards what he thought of it. Reduced as we were, we still had a few bottles of champagne left. Champagne being an especial weakness of our gigantic friend, it occurred to some one that this was a proper occasion to open a couple of bottles. Louis, the Princess, and I were quite, as the Scotch so well say, "begrutten," Areia's immense eyes were fairly melting out of his head with emotion, the priest was wiping his eyes and blowing his nose: and then for no apparent cause we suddenly fell to drinking and clinking glasses quite merrily: the bewildered attendant clinked and drank too, and then sat down and waited in case there should be any repetition of the drinking part of the performance. And sure enough there was, for in the midst of an animated discussion as to ways and means, Mrs. Stevenson announced that it was St. Andrew's day, so again the attendant clinked and drank with Ori's mad foreigners.

It is quite true that we live almost entirely upon native food; our luncheon to-day consisted of raw fish with sauce made of cocoanut milk mixed with sea water and lime juice, taro poi-poi, and bananas roasted in hot stones in a little pit in the ground, with cocoanut cream to eat with them. Still we like coffee in the evening, a little wine at dinner, and a few other products of civilisation. It would be possible, the chief said, to send a boat, but that would cost sixty dollars. A final arrangement, which we were forced to accept, was that Rui should go in his own boat, and the chief would appoint a substitute for some public work that he was then engaged upon. Early the next morning, amidst a raging sea and a storming wind, Rui departed with three men to help him. It is forty miles to Papeete, and

Rui, starting in the early morning, arrived there at nine o'clock; but alas, the wind was against him, and it was altogether six days before he got back.

Louis has done a great deal of work on his new story, *The Master of Ballantrae*, almost finished it, in fact, while Mrs. Stevenson and I are deep in the mysteries of hat-making, which is a ladies' accomplishment taking the place of water-colour drawing in England. It is a small compliment to present a hat to an acquaintance. Altogether we have about thirteen. Next door to us is Areia's out-of-door house, where he and the ladies of his family sleep and eat; it has a thatched roof of palm branches, and a floor of boards, the sides and ends being open to the world. On the floor are spread mats plaited of pandanus leaves, and pillows stuffed with silk cotton from the cotton tree. We make little calls upon the ladies, lie upon the mats, and smoke cigarettes made of tobacco leaves rolled in a bit of dried pandanus, and admire their work, or get a lesson; or they call upon us, and lie upon our mats. One day there was an election in the Farehau. It takes place all over the island once a year, and among others, the sub-chief and head-councillor is chosen. For the latter, our Rui was a candidate. In the beginning, the French deposed the born chiefs and told the people to elect men for themselves. The choice of Tautira fell upon Rui, who declined the honour, saying that Areia was his natural chief, and he could not take a position that should belong to his superior; upon which the people elected Areia chief, and Rui sub-chief and head-councillor. We all went over to the Farehau, where Areia sat in the middle of his councillors on a dais behind a long table. The Farehau is an immense bird-cage of bamboos tied together with pandanus fibre, and thatched with palms. In front of the dais the ground is deeply covered with dried leaves. The costume of the dignitaries was rather odd. Areia wore a white shirt and blue flannel coat, which was well enough; but on his plump legs were a pair of the most incredible trousers: light blue calico with a small red pattern, such as servant girls wear for gowns in England: on his feet were neat

little shoes and stockings. Rui was a fine sight, and we were very proud of him; he sat, exactly like an English gentleman, holding himself well in hand, alert as a fox and keen as a greyhound: several men spoke from the farther end of the hall, making objections of some sort, we could see. Rui listened with a half satirical, half kindly smile in his eyes, and then dropped a quiet answer without rising from his seat, which had the effect of raising a shout of laughter, and quite demolishing his opponent. Voters came up to the table and dropped their bits of paper into a slit in a box: some led children by the hand, and some carried babies in their arms; across the centre of the great room children and dogs ran chasing each other and playing. I noticed two little maids who walked up and down for a long time with their arms intertwined about each other's waists. Near where we sat (we were on the dais, above the common herd), a pretty young lady having tied up her dog's mouth with a tuft of grass, industriously caught and cracked fleas from its back. Both Lloyd and I grew very sleepy, and as we did not like to leave till the election was decided, we just threw ourselves down and took a nap at the feet of the councillors: nor did we wake till the chief called out to us in English "it is finished." I never thought I should be able to calmly sleep at a public meeting on a platform in the face of several hundred people: but it is wonderful how quickly one takes up the ways of a people when you live with them as intimately as we do.

I hear dinner coming on the table, so with much love from us all to you and other dear ones, including our dear friend Henry James, believe me, affectionately yours,

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Yacht Casco, *at Sea*, 14*th January*, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—Twenty days out from Papeete. Yes, sir, all that, and only (for a guess) in 4° north or at the best 4° 30′, though already the wind seems to smell

a little of the North Pole. My handwriting you must take as you get, for we are speeding along through a nasty swell, and I can only keep my place at the table by means of a foot against the divan, the unoccupied hand meanwhile gripping the ink-bottle. As we begin (so very slowly) to draw near to seven months of correspondence, we are all in some fear; and I want to have letters written before I shall be plunged into that boiling pot of disagreeables which I constantly expect at Honolulu. What is needful can be added there.

We were kept two months at Tautira in the house of my dear old friend, Ori a Ori, till both the masts of this invaluable yacht had been repaired. It was all for the best; Tautira being the most beautiful spot, and its people the most amiable, I have ever found. Besides which, the climate suited me to the ground; I actually went sea-bathing almost every day, and in our feasts (we are all huge eaters in Taiarapu) have been known to apply four times for pig. And then again I got wonderful materials for my book, collected songs and legends on the spot; songs still sung in chorus by perhaps a hundred persons, not two of whom can agree on their translation; legends, on which I have seen half a dozen seniors sitting in conclave and debating what came next. Once I went a day's journey to the other side of the island to Tati, the high chief of the Tevas—*my* chief that is, for I am now a Teva and Teriitera, at your service—to collect more and correct what I had already. In the meanwhile I got on with my work, almost finished *The Master of Ballantrae*, which contains more human work than anything of mine but *Kidnapped*, and wrote the half of another ballad, the *Song of Rahero*, on a Taiarapu legend of my own clan, sir—not so much fire as the *Feast of Famine*, but promising to be more even and correct. But the best fortune of our stay at Tautira was my knowledge of Ori himself, one of the finest creatures extant. The day of our parting was a sad one. We deduced from it a rule for travellers: not to stay two months in one place—which is to cultivate regrets.

At last our contemptible ship was ready; to sea we went, bound for Honolulu and the letter-bag, on Christmas Day; and from then to now have experienced every sort of minor misfortune, squalls, calms, contrary winds and seas, pertinacious rains, declining stores, till we came almost to regard ourselves as in the case of Vanderdecken. Three days ago our luck seemed to improve, we struck a leading breeze, got creditably through the doldrums, and just as we looked to have the N.E. trades and a straight run, the rains and squalls and calms began again about midnight, and this morning, though there is breeze enough to send us along, we are beaten back by an obnoxious swell out of the north. Here is a page of complaint, when a verse of thanksgiving had perhaps been more in place. For all this time we must have been skirting past dangerous weather, in the tail and circumference of hurricanes, and getting only annoyance where we should have had peril, and ill-humour instead of fear.

I wonder if I have managed to give you any news this time, or whether the usual damn hangs over my letter? "The midwife whispered, Be thou dull!" or at least inexplicit. Anyway I have tried my best, am exhausted with the effort, and fall back into the land of generalities. I cannot tell you how often we have planned our arrival at the Monument: two nights ago, the 12th January, we had it all planned out, arrived in the lights and whirl of Waterloo, hailed a hansom, span up Waterloo Road, over the bridge, etc., etc., and hailed the Monument gate in triumph and with indescribable delight. My dear Custodian, I always think we are too sparing of assurances: Cordelia is only to be excused by Regan and Goneril in the same nursery; I wish to tell you that the longer I live, the more dear do you become to me; nor does my heart own any stronger sentiment. If the bloody schooner didn't send me flying in every sort of direction at the same time, I would say better what I feel so much; but really, if you were here, you would not be writing letters, I believe; and even I, though of a more marine constitution, am much perturbed by this bobbery and wish—O

ye Gods, how I wish!—that it was done, and we had arrived, and I had Pandora's Box (my mail-bag) in hand, and was in the lively hope of something eatable for dinner instead of salt horse, tinned mutton, duff without any plums, and pie fruit which now make up our whole repertory. O Pandora's Box! I wonder what you will contain. As like as not you will contain but little money: if that be so, we shall have to retire to 'Frisco in the *Casco*, and thence by sea *via* Panama to Southampton, where we should arrive in April. I would like fine to see you on the tug: ten years older both of us than the last time you came to welcome Fanny and me to England. If we have money, however, we shall do a little differently: send the *Casco* away from Honolulu empty of its high-born lessees, for that voyage to 'Frisco is one long dead beat in foul and at last in cold weather; stay a while behind, follow by steamer, cross the States by train, stay a while in New York on business, and arrive probably by the German Line in Southampton. But all this is a question of money. We shall have to lie very dark a while to recruit our finances: what comes from the book of the cruise, I do not want to touch until the capital is repaid.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Honolulu, January, 1889

My dear Burlingame,—Here at last I have arrived. We could not get away from Tahiti till Christmas Day, and then had thirty days of calms and squalls, a deplorable passage. This has thrown me all out of gear in every way. I plunge into business.

1. *The Master*. Herewith go three more parts. You see he grows in bulk; this making ten already, and I am not sure yet if I can finish it in an eleventh; which shall go to you *quam primum*—I hope by next mail.

2. *Illustrations to M.* I totally forgot to try to write to Hole. It was just as well, for I find it impossible to

forecast with sufficient precision. You had better throw off all this and let him have it at once. *Please do : all and at once : see further ;* and I should hope he would still be in time for the later numbers. The three pictures I have received are so truly good that I should bitterly regret having the volume imperfectly equipped. They are the best illustrations I have seen since I don't know when.

3. *Money.* To-morrow the mail comes in, and I hope it will bring me money either from you or home, but I will add a word on that point.

4. My address will be Honolulu—no longer Yacht *Casco*, which I am packing off—till probably April.

5. As soon as I am through with *The Master*, I shall finish *The Game of Bluff*—now rechristened *The Wrong Box*. This I wish to sell, cash down. It is of course copyright in the States ; and I offer it to you for five thousand dollars. Please reply on this by return. Also please tell the typewriter who was so good as to be amused by our follies that I am filled with admiration for his piece of work.

6. *Master* again. Please see that I haven't the name of the Governor of New York wrong (1764 is the date) in part ten. I have no book of reference to put me right. Observe you now have up to August inclusive in hand, so you should begin to feel happy.

Is this all ? I wonder, and fear not. Henry the Trader has not yet turned up : I hope he may to-morrow, when we expect a mail. Not one word of business have I received either from the States or England, nor anything in the shape of coin ; which leaves me in a fine uncertainty and quite penniless on these islands. H.M.* (who is a gentleman of a courtly order and much tinctured with letters) is very polite ; I may possibly ask for the position of palace doorkeeper. My voyage has been a singular mixture of good and ill-fortune. As far as regards interest and material, the fortune has been admirable ; as far as regards time, money, and impedi..ents of

* King Kalakaua.

all kinds, from squalls and calms to rotten masts and sprung spars, simply detestable. I hope you will be interested to hear of two volumes on the wing. The cruise itself, you are to know, will make a big volume with appendices; some of it will first appear as (what they call) letters in some of M'Clure's papers. I believe the book when ready will have a fair measure of serious interest: I have had great fortune in finding old songs and ballads and stories, for instance, and have many singular instances of life in the last few years among these islands.

The second volume is of ballads. You know *Ticonderoga*. I have written another: *The Feast of Famine*, a Marquesan story. A third is half done: *The Song of Rahero*, a genuine Tahitian legend. A fourth dances before me. A Hawaiian fellow this, *The Priest's Drought*, or some such name. If, as I half suspect, I get enough subjects out of the islands, *Ticonderoga* shall be suppressed, and we'll call the volume *South Sea Ballads*. In health, spirits, renewed interest in life, and, I do believe, refreshed capacity for work, the cruise has proved a wise folly. Still we're not home, and (although the friend of a crowned head) are penniless upon these (as one of my correspondents used to call them) "lovely but *fatil* islands." By the way, who wrote the *Lion of the Nile?* My dear sir, that is Something Like. Overdone in bits, it has a true thought and a true ring of language. Beg the anonymous from me, to delete (when he shall republish) the two last verses, and end on "the lion of the Nile." One Lampman has a good sonnet on a "Winter Evening" in, I think, the same number: he seems ill-named, but I am tempted to hope a man is not always answerable for his name.* For instance, you would think you knew mine. No such matter. It is—at your service and Mr. Scribner's and that of all of the faithful—Teriitera (pray pronounce Tayree-Tayra) or (*gallicé*) Téri-téra.

R. L. S.

More when the mail shall come.

* This is the Canadian poet, Archibald Lampman (d. 1899).

I am an idiot. I want to be clear on one point. Some of Hole's drawings must of course be too late; and yet they seem to me so excellent I would fain have the lot complete. It is one thing for you to pay for drawings which are to appear in that soul-swallowing machine, your magazine: quite another if they are only to illustrate a volume. I wish you to take a brisk (even a fiery) decision on the point; and let Hole know. To resume my desultory song, I desire you would carry the same fire (hereinbefore suggested) into your decision on *The Wrong Box*; for in my present state of benighted ignorance as to my affairs for the last seven months—I know not even whether my house or my mother's house have been let—I desire to see something definite in front of me—outside the lot of palace doorkeeper. I believe the said *Wrong Box* is a real lark; in which, of course, I may be grievously deceived; but the typewriter is with me. I may also be deceived as to the numbers of *The Master* now going and already gone; but to me they seem First Chop, sir, First Chop. I hope I shall pull off that damned ending; but it still depresses me: this is your doing, Mr Burlingame: you would have it there and then, and I fear it—I fear that ending.

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Honolulu, February 8th, 1889

My dear Charles,—Here we are at Honolulu, and have dismissed the yacht, and lie here till April anyway, in a fine state of haze, which I am yet in hopes some letter of yours (still on the way) may dissipate. No money, and not one word as to money! However, I have got the yacht paid off in triumph, I think; and though we stay here impignorate, it should not be for long, even if you bring us no extra help from home. The cruise has been a great success, both as to matter, fun, and health; and yet, Lord, man! we're pleased to be ashore! Yon was

a very fine voyage from Tahiti up here, but—the dry land's a fine place too, and we don't mind squalls any longer, and eh, man, that's a great thing. Blow, blow, thou wintry wind, thou hast done me no appreciable harm beyond a few grey hairs! Altogether, this foolhardy venture is achieved; and if I have but nine months of life and any kind of health, I shall have both eaten my cake and got it back again with usury. But, man, there have been days when I felt guilty, and thought I was in no position for the head of a house.

Your letter and accounts are doubtless at S. F. and will reach me in course. My wife is no great shakes; she is the one who has suffered most. My mother has had a Huge Old Time; Lloyd is first chop; I so well that I do not know myself—sea-bathing, if you please, and what is far more dangerous, entertaining and being entertained by His Majesty here, who is a very fine intelligent fellow, but O, Charles! what a crop for the drink! He carries it, too, like a mountain with a sparrow on its shoulders. We calculated five bottles of champagne in three hours and a half (afternoon), and the sovereign quite presentable, although perceptibly more dignified at the end. . . .

The extraordinary health I enjoy and variety of interests I find among these islands would tempt me to remain here; only for Lloyd, who is not well placed in such countries for a permanency; and a little for Colvin, to whom I feel I owe a sort of filial duty. And these two considerations will no doubt bring me back—to go to bed again—in England.—Yours ever affectionately,

R. L. S.

To R. A. M. Stevenson

Honolulu, Hawaiian Islands,
February, 1889

My dear Bob,—My extremely foolhardy venture is practically over. How foolhardy it was I don't think

I realised. We had a very small schooner, and, like most yachts, over-rigged and over-sparred, and like many American yachts on a very dangerous sail plan. The waters we sailed in are, of course, entirely unlighted, and very badly charted; in the Dangerous Archipelago, through which we were fools enough to go, we were perfectly in ignorance of where we were for a whole night and half the next day, and this in the midst of invisible islands and rapid and variable currents; and we were lucky when we found our whereabouts at last. We have twice had all we wanted in the way of squalls; once, as I came on deck, I found the green sea over the cockpit coamings and running down the companion like a brook to meet me; at that same moment the foresail sheet jammed and the captain had no knife; this was the only occasion on the cruise that ever I set a hand to a rope, but I worked like a Trojan, judging the possibility of hemorrhage better than the certainty of drowning. Another time I saw a rather singular thing: our whole ship's company as pale as paper from the captain to the cook; we had a black squall astern on the port side and a white squall ahead to starboard; the complication passed off innocuous, the black squall only fetching us with its tail, and the white one slewing off somewhere else. Twice we were a long while (days) in the close vicinity of hurricane weather, but again luck prevailed, and we saw none of it. These are dangers incident to these seas and small craft. What was an amazement, and at the same time a powerful stroke of luck, both our masts were rotten, and we found it out—I was going to say in time, but it was stranger and luckier than that. The head of the mainmast hung over so that hands were afraid to go to the helm; and less than three weeks before—I am not sure it was more than a fortnight—we had been nearly twelve hours beating off the lee shore of Eimeo (or Moorea, next island to Tahiti) in half a gale of wind with a violent head sea: she would neither tack nor wear once, and had to be boxed off with the mainsail—you can imagine what an ungodly show of kites we carried—and yet the mast stood. The

very day after that, in the southern bight of Tahiti, we had a near squeak, the wind suddenly coming calm; the reefs were close in with, my eye! what a surf! The pilot thought we were gone, and the captain had a boat cleared, when a lucky squall came to our rescue. My wife, hearing the order given about the boats, remarked to my mother, "Isn't that nice? We shall soon be ashore!" Thus does the female mind unconsciously skirt along the verge of eternity. Our voyage up here was most disastrous —calms, squalls, head sea, waterspouts of rain, hurricane weather all about, and we in the midst of the hurricane season, when even the hopeful builder and owner of the yacht had pronounced these seas unfit for her. We ran out of food, and were quite given up for lost in Honolulu: people had ceased to speak to Belle* about the *Casco*, as a deadly subject.

But the perils of the deep were part of the programme; and though I am very glad to be done with them for a while and comfortably ashore, where a squall does not matter a snuff to any one, I feel pretty sure I shall want to go to sea again ere long. The dreadful risk I took was financial, and double-headed. First, I had to sink a lot of money in the cruise, and if I didn't get health, how was I to get it back? I have got health to a wonderful extent; and as I have the most interesting matter for my book, bar accidents, I ought to get all I have laid out and a profit. But, second (what I own I never considered till too late), there was the danger of collisions, of damages and heavy repairs, of disablement, towing, and salvage; indeed, the cruise might have turned round and cost me double. Nor will this danger be quite over till I hear the yacht is in San Francisco; for though I have shaken the dust of her deck from my feet, I fear (as a point of law) she is still mine till she gets there.

From my point of view, up to now the cruise has been a wonderful success. I never knew the world was so

* Stevenson's step-daughter, Mrs. Strong, who was at this time living at Honolulu, and joined his party and family for good when they continued their voyage from thence in the following June.

amusing. On the last voyage we had grown so used to sea life that no one wearied, though it lasted a full month, except Fanny, who is always ill. All the time our visits to the islands have been more like dreams than realities: the people, the life, the beachcombers, the old stories and songs I have picked up, so interesting; the climate, the scenery, and (in some places) the women, so beautiful. The women are handsomest in Tahiti, the men in the Marquesas; both as fine types as can be imagined. Lloyd reminds me, I have not told you one characteristic incident of the cruise from a semi-naval point of view. One night we were going ashore in Anaho Bay; the most awful noise on deck; the breakers distinctly audible in the cabin; and there I had to sit below, entertaining in my best style a negroid native chieftain, much the worse for rum! You can imagine the evening's pleasure.

This naval report on cruising in the South Seas would be incomplete without one other trait. On our voyage up here I came one day into the dining-room, the hatch in the floor was open, the ship's boy was below with a baler, and two of the hands were carrying buckets as for a fire; this meant that the pumps had ceased working.

One stirring day was that in which we sighted Hawaii. It blew fair, but very strong; we carried jib, foresail, and mainsail, all single-reefed, and she carried her lee rail under water and flew. The swell the heaviest I have ever been out in—I tried in vain to estimate the height, *at least* fifteen feet—came tearing after us about a point and a half off the wind. We had the best hand—old Louis—at the wheel; and, really, he did nobly, and had noble luck, for it never caught us once. At times it seemed we must have it; old Louis would look over his shoulder with the queerest look and dive down his neck into his shoulders; and then it missed us somehow, and only sprays came over our quarter, turning the little outside lane of deck into a mill race as deep as to the cockpit coamings. I never remember anything more delightful and exciting. Pretty soon after we were lying absolutely becalmed under the lee of Hawaii, of which we had been

warned; and the captain never confessed he had done it on purpose, but when accused, he smiled. Really, I suppose he did quite right, for we stood committed to a dangerous race, and to bring her to the wind would have been rather a heart-sickening manœuvre.

R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

At Honolulu, Stevenson found awaiting him, among the accumulations of the mail-bag, two letters of friendly homage—the first, I think, he had received from any foreign *confrère*—addressed to him by the distinguished young French scholar and man of letters, M. Marcel Schwob, since deceased.

Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, February 8th, 1889

Dear Sir,—I thank you—from the midst of such a flurry as you can imagine, with seven months' accumulated correspondence on my table—for your two friendly and clever letters. Pray write me again. I shall be home in May or June, and not improbably shall come to Paris in the summer. Then we can talk; or in the interval I may be able to write, which is to-day out of the question. Pray take a word from a man of crushing occupations, and count it as a volume. Your little *conte* is delightful. Ah yes, you are right, I love the eighteenth century; and so do you, and have not listened to its voice in vain.—The Hunted One,

Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Charles Baxter

Honolulu, 8th March, 1889

My dear Charles,—At last I have the accounts: the Doer has done excellently, and in the words of ——, "I reciprocate every step of your behaviour." . . . I send a letter for Bob in your care, as I don't know his

Liverpool address,* by which (for he is to show you part of it) you will see we have got out of this adventure—or hope to have—with wonderful fortune. I have the retrospective horrors on me when I think of the liabilities I incurred; but, thank God, I think I'm in port again, and I have found one climate in which I can enjoy life. Even Honolulu is too cold for me; but the south isles were a heaven upon earth to a puir, catarrhal party like John'sone. We think, as Tahiti is too complete a banishment, to try Madeira. It's only a week from England, good communications, and I suspect in climate and scenery not unlike our dear islands; in people, alas! there can be no comparison. But friends could go, and I could come in summer, so I should not be quite cut off.

Lloyd and I have finished a story, *The Wrong Box*. If it is not funny, I am sure I do not know what is. I have split over writing it. Since I have been here, I have been toiling like a galley slave: three numbers of *The Master* to rewrite, five chapters of *The Wrong Box* to write and rewrite, and about five hundred lines of a narrative poem to write, rewrite, and re-rewrite. Now I have *The Master* waiting me for its continuation, two numbers more; when that's done, I shall breathe. This spasm of activity has been chequered with champagne parties: Happy and Glorious, Hawaii Ponoi paua: kou moi—(Native Hawaiians, dote upon your monarch!) Hawaiian God save the King. (In addition to my other labours, I am learning the language with a native moonshee.) Kalakaua is a terrible companion; a bottle of fizz is like a glass of sherry to him; he thinks nothing of five or six in an afternoon as a whet for dinner. You should see a photograph of our party after an afternoon with H. H. M.: my! what a crew!—Yours ever affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

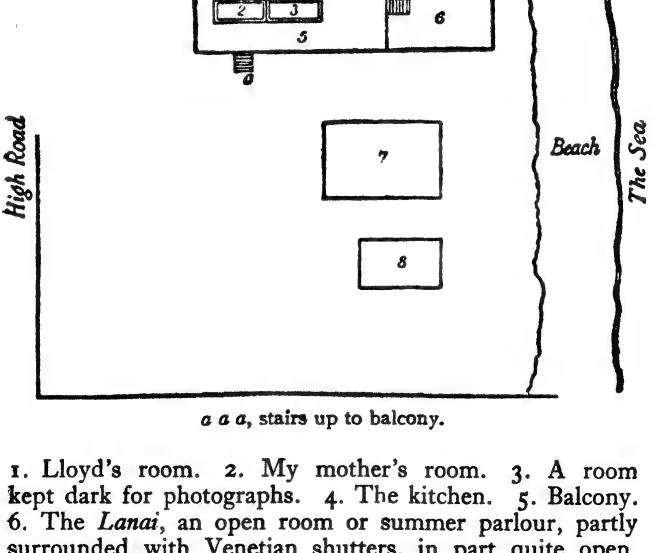
* R. A. M. Stevenson was at this time professor of Fine Art in the University of Liverpool.

To Sidney Colvin

Ill-health and pressing preoccupations, together with uncertainty as to when and where letters would reach him, had kept me from writing during the previous autumn and winter.

Honolulu, March, 1889

My dear Colvin,—Still not a word from you! I am utterly cast down; but I will try to return good for evil and for once give you news. We are here in the suburb of Honolulu in a rambling house or set of houses in a great garden.



a a a, stairs up to balcony.

1. Lloyd's room. 2. My mother's room. 3. A room kept dark for photographs. 4. The kitchen. 5. Balcony. 6. The *Lanai*, an open room or summer parlour, partly surrounded with Venetian shutters, in part quite open, which is the living-room. 7. A crazy dirty cottage used for the arts. 8. Another crazy dirty cottage, where Fanny and I live. The town is some three miles away, but

the house is connected by telephone with the chief shops, and the tramway runs to within a quarter of a mile of us. I find Honolulu a beastly climate after Tahiti and have been in bed a little; but my colds *took on no catarrhal symptom*, which is staggeringly delightful. I am studying Hawaiian with a native, a Mr. Joseph Poepoe, a clever fellow too: the tongue is a little bewildering; I am reading a pretty story in native—no, really it is pretty, although wandering and wordy; highly pretty with its continual traffic from one isle to another of the soothsayer, pursuing rainbows. Fanny is, I think, a good deal better on the whole, having profited like me by the tropics; my mother and Lloyd are first-rate. I do not think I have heard from you since last May; certainly not since June; and this really frightens me. Do write, even now. Scribner's Sons it should be; we shall probably be out of this some time in April, home some time in June. But the world whirls to me perceptibly, a mass of times and seasons and places and engagements, and seas to cross, and continents to traverse, so that I scarce know where I am. Well, I have had a brave time. *Et ego in Arcadia*—though I don't believe Arcadia was a spot upon Tahiti. I have written another long narrative poem: the *Song of Rahero*. Privately, I think it good: but your ominous silence over the *Feast of Famine* leads me to fear we shall not be agreed. Is it possible I have wounded you in some way? I scarce like to dream that it is possible; and yet I know too well it may be so. If so, don't write, and you can pitch into me when we meet. I am, admittedly, as mild as London Stout now; and the Old Man Virulent much a creature of the past. My dear Colvin, I owe you and Fleeming Jenkin, the two older men who took the trouble, and knew how to make a friend of me, everything that I have or am: if I have behaved ill, just hold on and give me a chance, you shall have the slanging of me and I bet I shall prefer it to this silence.—Ever, my dear Colvin, your most affectionate

R. L. S.

[Mrs. R. L. Stevenson to Mrs. Sitwell

This letter brought to friends in England the first news of the intended prolongation of the cruise among the remoter islands of the Pacific.

Honolulu, towards the end of March, 1889

My dear Friend,—Louis has improved so wonderfully in the delicious islands of the South Seas, that we think of trying yet one more voyage. We are a little uncertain as to how we shall go, whether in a missionary ship, or by hiring schooners from point to point, but the "unregenerate" islands we must see. I suppose we shall be off some time in June, which will fetch us back to England in another year's time. You could hardly believe it if you could see Louis now. He looks as well as he ever did in his life, and has had no sign of cough or hemorrhage (begging pardon of Nemesis) for many months. It seems a pity to return to England until his health is firmly re-established, and also a pity not to see all that we can see quite easily starting from this place; and which will be our only opportunity in life. Of course there is the usual risk from hostile natives, and the horrible sea, but a positive risk is so much more wholesome than a negative one, and it is all such joy to Louis and Lloyd. As for me, I hate the sea, and am afraid of it (though no one will believe that because in time of danger I do not make an outcry—nevertheless I *am* afraid of it, and it is not kind to me), but I love the tropic weather, and the wild people, and to see my two boys so happy. Mrs. Stevenson is going back to Scotland in May, as she does not like to be longer away from her old sister, who has been very ill. And besides, we do not feel justified in taking her to the sort of places we intend to visit. As for me, I can get comfort out of very rough surroundings for my people, I can work hard and enjoy it; I can even shoot pretty well, and though I "don't want to fight, by jingo if I must," why I can. I don't suppose there will be any occasion for that sort of thing—only in case.

I am not quite sure of the names, but I *think* our new

cruise includes the Gilberts, the Fijis, and the Solomons. A letter might go from the Fijis; Louis will write the particulars, of which I am not sure. As for myself, I have had more cares than I was really fit for. To keep house on a yacht is no easy thing. When Louis and I broke loose from the ship and lived alone amongst the natives I got on very well. It was when I was deathly sea-sick, and the question was put to me by the cook, "what shall we have for the cabin dinner, what for to-morrow's breakfast, what for lunch? and what about the sailors' food? Please come and look at the biscuits, for the weevils have got into them, and show me how to make yeast that will rise of itself, and smell the pork which seems pretty high, and give me directions about making a pudding with molasses—and what is to be done about the bugs?" ——etc., etc. In the midst of heavy dangerous weather, when I was lying on the floor clutching a basin, down comes the mate with a cracked head, and I must needs cut off the hair matted with blood, wash and dress the wound, and administer restoratives. I do not like being "the lady of the yacht," but ashore! O, then I felt I was repaid for all. I wonder did any of my letters from beautiful Tautira ever come to hand, with the descriptions of our life with Louis's adopted brother Ori a Ori? Ori wrote to us, if no one else did, and I mean to give you a translation of his letter. It begins with our native names.

Tautira, 26 Dec., 1888

To Teriitera (Louis) and Tapina Tutu (myself) and Aromaiterai (Lloyd) and Teiriha (Mrs. Stevenson) Salutation in the true Jesus.

I make you to know my great affection. At the hour when you left us, I was filled with tears; my wife, Rui Tehini, also, and all of my household. When you embarked I felt a great sorrow. It is for this that I went upon the road, and you looked from that ship, and I looked at you on the ship with great grief until you had raised the anchor and hoisted the sails. When the ship started, I

ran along the beach to see you still; and when you were on the open sea I cried out to you, "farewell Louis": and when I was coming back to my house I seemed to hear your voice crying "Rui, farewell." Afterwards I watched the ship as long as I could until the night fell; and when it was dark I said to myself, "if I had wings I should fly to the ship to meet you, and to sleep amongst you, so that I might be able to come back to shore and to tell Rui Tehini, 'I have slept upon the ship of Teriitera.'" After that we passed that night in the impatience of grief. Towards eight o'clock I seemed to hear your voice, "Teriitera—Rui—here is the hour for putter and tiro" (cheese and syrup). I did not sleep that night, thinking continually of you, my very dear friend, until the morning: being then awake I went to see Tapina Tutu on her bed, and alas, she was not there. Afterwards I looked into your rooms; they did not please me as they used to do. I did not hear your voice crying, "hail, Rui." I thought then that you had gone, and that you had left me. Rising up I went to the beach to see your ship, and I could not see it. I wept, then, till the night, telling myself continually. "Teriitera returns into his own country and leaves his dear Rui in grief, so that I suffer for him, and weep for him." I will not forget you in my memory. Here is the thought: I desire to meet you again. It is my dear Teriitera makes the only riches I desire in this world. It is your eyes that I desire to see again. It must be that your body and my body shall eat together at our table: there is what would make my heart content. But now we are separated. May God be with you all. May His word and His mercy go with you, so that you may be well and we also, according to the words of Paul.

ORI A ORI; that is to say, RUI.

After reading this to me Louis has left in tears saying that he is not worthy that such a letter should be written to him. We hope to so manage that we shall stop at Tahiti and see Rui once more. I tell myself that pleasant story when I wake in the night.

I find my head swimming so that I cannot write any more. I wish some rich Catholic would send a parlour organ to Père Bruno of Tautira. I am going to try and save money to do it myself, but he may die before I have enough. I feel ashamed to be sitting here when I think of that old man who cannot draw because of scrivener's paralysis, who has no one year in and year out to speak to but natives (our Rui is a Protestant not bigoted like the rest of them—but still a Protestant) and the only pastime he has is playing on an old broken parlour organ whose keys are mostly dumb. I know no more pathetic figure. Have you no rich Catholic friends who would send him an organ that he could play upon? Of course I am talking nonsense, and yet I know somewhere that person exists if only I knew the place.

Our dearest love to you all.

FANNY.]

TO HENRY JAMES

Honolulu [*March*, 1889]

MY DEAR JAMES,—Yes—I own up—I am untrue to friendship and (what is less, but still considerable) to civilisation. I am not coming home for another year. There it is, cold and bald, and now you won't believe in me at all, and serve me right (says you) and the devil take me. But look here, and judge me tenderly. I have had more fun and pleasure of my life these past months than ever before, and more health than any time in ten long years. And even here in Honolulu I have withered in the cold; and this precious deep is filled with islands, which we may still visit; and though the sea is a deathful place, I like to be there, and like squalls (when they are over); and to draw near to a new island, I cannot say how much I like. In short, I take another year of this sort of life, and mean to try to work down among the poisoned arrows, and mean (if it may be) to come back again when the thing is through, and converse with Henry

James as heretofore ; and in the meanwhile issue directions to H. J. to write to me once more. Let him address here at Honolulu, for my views are vague ; and if it is sent here it will follow and find me, if I am to be found ; and if I am not to be found, the man James will have done his duty, and we shall be at the bottom of the sea, where no post-office clerk can be expected to discover us, or languishing on a coral island, the philosophic drudges of some barbarian potentate : perchance, of an American Missionary. My wife has just sent to Mrs. Sitwell a translation (*tant bien que mal*) of a letter I have had from my chief friend in this part of the world : go and see her, and get a hearing of it ; it will do you good ; it is a better method of correspondence than even Henry James's. I jest, but seriously it is a strange thing for a tough, sick, middle-aged scrivener like R. L. S. to receive a letter so conceived from a man fifty years old, a leading politician, a crack orator, and the great wit of his village : boldly say, " the highly popular M.P. of Tautira." My nineteenth century strikes here, and lies alongside of something beautiful and ancient. I think the receipt of such a letter might humble, shall I say even—— ? and for me, I would rather have received it than written *Redgauntlet* or the sixth *Æneid*. All told, if my books have enabled or helped me to make this voyage, to know Rui, and to have received such a letter, they have (in the old prefatorial expression) not been writ in vain. It would seem from this that I have been not so much humbled as puffed up ; but, I assure you, I have in fact been both. A little of what that letter says is my own earning ; not all, but yet a little ; and the little makes me proud, and all the rest ashamed ; and in the contrast, how much more beautiful altogether is the ancient man than him of to-day !

Well, well, Henry James is pretty good, though he *is* of the nineteenth century, and that glaringly. And to curry favour with him, I wish I could be more explicit ; but, indeed, I am still of necessity extremely vague, and cannot tell what I am to do, nor where I am to go for some while yet. As soon as I am sure, you shall hear. All

are fairly well—the wife, your countrywoman, least of all; troubles are not entirely wanting; but on the whole we prosper, and we are all affectionately yours,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Honolulu, April 2nd, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am beginning to be ashamed of writing on to you without the least acknowledgment, like a tramp; but I do not care—I am hardened; and whatever be the cause of your silence, I mean to write till all is blue. I am outright ashamed of my news, which is that we are not coming home for another year. I cannot but hope it may continue the vast improvement of my health: I think it good for Fanny and Lloyd; and we have all a taste for this wandering and dangerous life. My mother I send home, to my relief, as this part of our cruise will be (if we can carry it out) rather difficult in places. Here is the idea: about the middle of June (unless the Boston Board objects) we sail from Honolulu in the missionary ship (barquentine auxiliary steamer) *Morning Star*: she takes us through the Gilberts and Marshalls, and drops us (this is my great idea) on Ponape, one of the volcanic islands of the Carolines. Here we stay marooned among a doubtful population, with a Spanish vice-governor and five native kings, and a sprinkling of missionaries all at loggerheads, on the chance of fetching a passage to Sydney in a trader, a labour ship or (maybe, but this appears too bright) a ship of war. If we can't get the *Morning Star* (and the Board has many reasons that I can see for refusing its permission) I mean to try to fetch Fiji, hire a schooner there, do the Fijis and Friendlies, hit the course of the *Richmond* at Tonga Tabu, make back by Tahiti, and so to S. F., and home: perhaps in June, 1890. For the latter part of the cruise will likely be the same in either case. You can see for yourself how much variety and adventure this promises, and that it is not devoid

of danger at the best; but if we can pull it off in safety, gives me a fine book of travel, and Lloyd a fine lecture and diorama, which should vastly better our finances.

I feel as if I were untrue to friendship; believe me, Colvin, when I look forward to this absence of another year, my conscience sinks at thought of the Monument: but I think you will pardon me if you consider how much this tropical weather mends my health. Remember me as I was at home, and think of me sea-bathing and walking about, as jolly as a sandboy: you will own the temptation is strong; and as the scheme, bar fatal accidents, is bound to pay into the bargain, sooner or later, it seems it would be madness to come home now, with an imperfect book, no illustrations to speak of, no diorama, and perhaps fall sick again by autumn. I do not think I delude myself when I say the tendency to catarrh has visibly diminished.

It is a singular thing that as I was packing up old papers ere I left Skerryvore, I came on the prophecies of a drunken Highland sibyl, when I was seventeen. She said I was to be very happy, to visit America, and *to be much upon the sea*. It seems as if it were coming true with a vengeance. Also, do you remember my strong, old, rooted belief that I shall die by drowning? I don't want that to come true, though it is an easy death; but it occurs to me oddly, with these long chances in front. I cannot say why I like the sea; no man is more cynically and constantly alive to its perils; I regard it as the highest form of gambling; and yet I love the sea as much as I hate gambling. Fine, clean emotions; a world all and always beautiful; air better than wine; interest unflagging; there is upon the whole no better life.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

[*Honolulu, April*, 1889]

My dear Burlingame,—This is to announce the most prodigious change of programme. I have seen so much

of the South Seas that I desire to see more, and I get so much health here that I dread a return to our vile climates. I have applied accordingly to the missionary folk to let me go round in the *Morning Star ;* and if the Boston Board should refuse, I shall get somehow to Fiji, hire a trading schooner, and see the Fijis and Friendlies and Samoa. He would be a South Seayer, Mr. Burlingame. Of course, if I go in the *Morning Star*, I see all the eastern (or western ?) islands.

Before I sail, I shall make out to let you have the last of *The Master ;* though I tell you it sticks—and I hope to have had some proofs forbye, of the verses anyway. And now to business.

I want (if you can find them) in the British sixpenny edition, if not, in some equally compact and portable shape—Seaside Library, for instance—the Waverley Novels entire, or as entire as you can get 'em, and the following of Marryat: *Phantom Ship*, *Peter Simple*, *Percival Keene*, *Privateersman*, *Children of the New Forest*, *Frank Mildmay*, *Newton Forster*, *Dog Fiend* (*Snarleyyow*). Also *Midshipman Easy*, *Kingsburn*, Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Motley's *Dutch Republic*, Lang's *Letters on Literature*, a complete set; of my works, *Jenkin*, in duplicate, also *Familiar Studies*, ditto.

I have to thank you for the accounts, which are satisfactory indeed, and for the cheque for $1000. Another account will have come and gone before I see you. I hope it will be equally roseate in colour. I am quite worked out, and this cursed end of *The Master* hangs over me like the arm of the gallows; but it is always darkest before dawn, and no doubt the clouds will soon rise; but it is a difficult thing to write, above all in Mackellarese; and I cannot yet see my way clear. If I pull this off, *The Master* will be a pretty good novel or I am the more deceived; and even if I don't pull it off, it'll still have some stuff in it.

We shall remain here until the middle of June anyway; but my mother leaves for Europe early in May. Hence our mail should continue to come here; but not hers.

I will let you know my next address, which will probably be Sydney. If we get on the *Morning Star*, I propose at present to get marooned on Ponape, and take my chance of getting a passage to Australia. It will leave times and seasons mighty vague, and the cruise is risky; but I shall know something of the South Seas when it is done, or else the South Seas will contain all there is of me. It should give me a fine book of travels, anyway.

Low will probably come and ask some dollars of you. Pray let him have them, they are for outfit. O, another complete set of my books should go to Captain A. H. Otis, care of Dr. Merritt, Yacht *Casco*, Oakland, Cal.—In haste,

R. L. S.

To Miss Adelaide Boodle

Honolulu, April 6th, 1889

My dear Miss Boodle,—Nobody writes a better letter than my Gamekeeper: so gay, so pleasant, so engagingly particular, answering (by some delicate instinct) all the questions she suggests. It is a shame you should get such a poor return as I can make, from a mind essentially and originally incapable of the art epistolary. I would let the paper-cutter take my place; but I am sorry to say the little wooden seaman did after the manner of seamen, and deserted in the Societies. The place he seems to have stayed at—seems, for his absence was not observed till we were near the Equator—was Tautira, and, I assure you, he displayed good taste, Tautira being as "nigh hand heaven" as a paper-cutter or anybody has a right to expect.

I think all our friends will be very angry with us, and I give the grounds of their probable displeasure bluntly—we are not coming home for another year. My mother returns next month. Fanny, Lloyd, and I push on again among the islands on a trading schooner, the *Equator*—first to the Gilbert group, which we shall have an opportunity to explore thoroughly; then, if occasion serve, to the Marshalls and Carolines; and if occasion (or money) fail,

to Samoa, and back to Tahiti. I own we are deserters, but we have excuses. You cannot conceive how these climates agree with the wretched house-plant of Skerryvore: he wonders to find himself sea-bathing, and cutting about the world loose, like a grown-up person. They agree with Fanny too, who does not suffer from her rheumatism, and with Lloyd also. And the interest of the islands is endless; and the sea, though I own it is a fearsome place, is very delightful. We had applied for places in the American missionary ship, the *Morning Star*, but this trading schooner is a far preferable idea, giving us more time and a thousandfold more liberty, so we determined to cut off the missionaries with a shilling.

The Sandwich Islands do not interest us very much; we live here, oppressed with civilisation, and look for good things in the future. But it would surprise you if you came out to-night from Honolulu (all shining with electric lights, and all in a bustle from the arrival of the mail, which is to carry you these lines) and crossed the long wooden causeway along the beach, and came out on the road through Kapiolani park, and seeing a gate in the palings, with a tub of goldfish by the wayside, entered casually in. The buildings stand in three groups by the edge of the beach, where an angry little spitfire sea continually spirts and thrashes with impotent irascibility, the big seas breaking further out upon the reef. The first is a small house, with a very large summer parlour, or *lanai*, as they call it here, roofed, but practically open. There you will find the lamps burning and the family sitting about the table, dinner just done: my mother, my wife, Lloyd, Belle, my wife's daughter, Austin her child, and to-night (by way of rarity) a guest. All about the walls our South Sea curiosities, war clubs, idols, pearl shells, stone axes, etc.; and the walls are only a small part of a *lanai*, the rest being glazed or latticed windows, or mere open space. You will see there no sign of the Squire, however; and being a person of a humane disposition, you will only glance in over the balcony railing at the merry-makers in the summer parlour, and

proceed further afield after the Exile. You look round, there is beautiful green turf, many trees of an outlandish sort that drop thorns—look out if your feet are bare; but I beg your pardon, you have not been long enough in the South Seas—and many oleanders in full flower. The next group of buildings is ramshackle, and quite dark; you make out a coach-house door, and look in—only some cocoanuts; you try round to the left and come to the sea front, where Venus and the moon are making luminous tracks on the water, and a great swell rolls and shines on the outer reef; and here is another door—all these places open from the outside—and you go in, and find photography, tubs of water, negatives steeping, a tap, and a chair and an ink-bottle, where my wife is supposed to write; round a little further, a third door, entering which you find a picture upon the easel and a table sticky with paints; a fourth door admits you to a sort of court, where there is a hen sitting—I believe on a fallacious egg. No sign of the Squire in all this. But right opposite the studio door you have observed a third little house, from whose open door lamplight streams and makes hay of the strong moonlight shadows. You had supposed it made no part of the grounds, for a fence runs round it lined with oleander; but as the Squire is nowhere else, is it not just possible he may be here? It is a grim little wooden shanty; cobwebs bedeck it; friendly mice inhabit its recesses; the mailed cockroach walks upon the wall; so also, I regret to say, the scorpion. Herein are two pallet beds, two mosquito curtains, strung to the pitch-boards of the roof, two tables laden with books and manuscripts, three chairs, and, in one of the beds, the Squire busy writing to yourself, as it chances, and just at this moment somewhat bitten by mosquitoes. He has just set fire to the insect powder, and will be all right in no time; but just now he contemplates large white blisters, and would like to scratch them, but knows better. The house is not bare; it has been inhabited by Kanakas, and—you know what children are!—the bare wood walls are pasted over with pages from the *Graphic*, *Harper's*

Weekly, etc. The floor is matted, and I am bound to say the matting is filthy. There are two windows and two doors, one of which is condemned; on the panels of that last a sheet of paper is pinned up, and covered with writing. I cull a few plums:—

"A duck-hammock for each person.
A patent organ like the commandant's at Taio hae.
Cheap and bad cigars for presents.
Revolvers.
Permanganate of potass.
Liniment for the head and sulphur.
Fine tooth-comb."

What do you think this is? Simply life in the South Seas foreshortened. These are a few of our desiderata for the next trip, which we jot down as they occur.

There, I have really done my best and tried to send something like a letter—one letter in return for all your dozens. Pray remember us all to yourself, Mrs. Boodle, and the rest of your house. I do hope your mother will be better when this comes. I shall write and give you a new address when I have made up my mind as to the most probable, and I do beg you will continue to write from time to time and give us airs from home. To-morrow—think of it—I must be off by a quarter to eight to drive in to the palace and breakfast with his Hawaiian Majesty at 8.30: I shall be dead indeed. Please give my news to Scott, I trust he is better; give him my warm regards. To you we all send all kinds of things, and I am the absentee Squire,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

Honolulu, April, 1889

MY DEAR CHARLES,—As usual, your letter is as good as a cordial, and I thank you for it, and all your care, kind-

ness, and generous and thoughtful friendship, from my heart. I was truly glad to hear a word of Colvin, whose long silence has terrified me; and glad to hear that you condoned the notion of my staying longer in the South Seas, for I have decided in that sense. The first idea was to go in the *Morning Star*, missionary ship; but now I have found a trading schooner, the *Equator*, which is to call for me here early in June and carry us through the Gilberts. What will happen then, the Lord knows. My mother does not accompany us: she leaves here for home early in May, and you will hear of us from her; but not, I imagine, anything more definite. We shall get dumped on Butaritari, and whether we manage to go on to the Marshalls and Carolines or whether we fall back on Samoa, Heaven must decide; but I mean to fetch back into the course of the *Richmond*—(to think you don't know what the *Richmond* is!—*the* steamer of the Eastern South Seas, joining New Zealand, Tongatabu, the Samoas, Tahiti, and Rarotonga, and carrying by last advices sheep in the saloon!)—into the course of the *Richmond* and make Tahiti again on the home track. Would I like to see the *Scots Observer?* Wouldn't I not? But whaur? I'm direckit at space. They have nae post-offishes at the Gilberts, and as for the Car'lines! Ye see, Mr. Baxter, we're no' just in the punkshewal *centre* o' civ'lisation. But pile them up for me, and when I've decided on an address, I'll let you ken, and ye'll can send them stavin' after me.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

The reference in the first paragraph is to the publication in the press, which Mr. Baxter had permitted, of one of Stevenson's letters written during the earlier part of his voyage. R. L. S. had remonstrated, always greatly disliking the publication of private letters during the writer's lifetime, and now writes to soften the effect of his remonstrance.

Honolulu, 10th May, 1889

My dear Charles,—I am appalled to gather from your last just to hand that you have felt so much concern about

the letter. Pray dismiss it from your mind. But I think you scarce appreciate how disagreeable it is to have your private affairs and private unguarded expressions getting into print. It would soon sicken any one of writing letters. I have no doubt that letter was very wisely selected, but it just shows how things crop up. There was a raging jealousy between the two yachts; our captain was nearly in a fight over it. However, no more; and whatever you think, my dear fellow, do not suppose me angry with you or——; although I was *annoyed at the circumstance*—a very different thing. But it is difficult to conduct life by letter, and I continually feel I may be drifting into some matter of offence, in which my heart takes no part.

I must now turn to a point of business. This new cruise of ours is somewhat venturesome; and I think it needful to warn you not to be in a hurry to suppose us dead. In these ill-charted seas, it is quite on the cards we might be cast on some unvisited, or very rarely visited, island; that there we might lie for a long time, even years, unheard of; and yet turn up smiling at the hinder end. So do not let me be "rowpit" till you get some certainty we have gone to Davie Jones in a squall, or graced the feast of some barbarian in the character of Long Pig.

I have just been a week away alone on the lee coast of Hawaii, the only white creature in many miles, riding five and a half hours one day, living with a native, seeing four lepers shipped off to Molokai, hearing native causes, and giving my opinion as *amicus curiæ* as to the interpretation of a statue in English; a lovely week among God's best—at least God's sweetest works—Polynesians. It has bettered me greatly. If I could only stay there the time that remains, I could get my work done and be happy; but the care of my family keeps me in vile Honolulu, where I am always out of sorts, amidst heat and cold and cesspools and beastly *haoles*.* What is a haole? You are one; and so, I am sorry to say, am I. After so long a dose of whites, it was a blessing to get among Polynesians again even for a week.

* The Hawaiian name for white men.

Well, Charles, there are waur haoles than yoursel', I'll say that for ye; and trust before I sail I shall get another letter with more about yourself.—Ever your affectionate friend,

R. L. S.

To W. H. Low

The allusions in the latter half of this letter are to the departure for Europe of the young Hawaiian princess Kaiulani (see the poem beginning "When from her land to mine she goes," in *Songs of Travel*), and to the circumstances of the great hurricane at Apia on March 15th, 1889.

Honolulu (about) 20th May, '89

My dear Low,— . . . The goods have come; many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all.—I have at length finished *The Master;* it has been a sore cross to me; but now he is buried, his body's under hatches,—his soul, if there is any hell to go to, gone to hell; and I forgive him: it is harder to forgive Burlingame for having induced me to begin the publication, or myself for suffering the induction.—Yes, I think Hole has done finely; it will be one of the most adequately illustrated books of our generation; he gets the note, he tells the story —*my* story: I know only one failure—the Master standing on the beach.—You must have a letter for me at Sydney—till further notice. Remember me to Mrs. Will H., the godlike sculptor, and any of the faithful. If you want to cease to be a republican, see my little Kaiulani, as she goes through—but she is gone already. You will die a red: I wear the colours of that little royal maiden, *Nous allons chanter à la ronde, si vous voulez!* only she is not blonde by several chalks, though she is but a half-blood, and the wrong half Edinburgh Scots like mysel'. But, O Low, I love the Polynesian: this civilisation of ours is a dingy, ungentlemanly business; it drops out too much of man, and too much of that the very beauty of the poor beast; who has his beauties in spite of Zola and Co. As usual, here is a whole letter with no news: I am

a bloodless, inhuman dog; and no doubt Zola is a better correspondent.—Long live your fine old English admiral—yours, I mean—the U.S.A. one at Samoa; I wept tears and loved myself and mankind when I read of him: he is not too much civilised. And there was Gordon, too; and there are others, beyond question. But if you could live, the only white folk, in a Polynesian village; and drink that warm light *vin du pays* of human affection and enjoy that simple dignity of all about you—I will not gush, for I am now in my fortieth year, which seems highly unjust, but there it is, Mr. Low, and the Lord enlighten your affectionate

R. L. S.

[MRS. R. L. STEVENSON TO SIDNEY COLVIN

This letter shows the writer in her character of wise and anxious critic of her husband's work. The result, in the judgment of most of his friends, went far to justify her misgivings.

Honolulu, May 21st, 1889

BEST OF FRIENDS,—It was a joy inexpressible to get a word from you at last. Fortunately for our peace of mind, we were almost positive that your letters had been sent to the places we had already left. Still it was a bitter disappointment to get nothing from you when we arrived here. I wish you could have seen us both throwing over the immense package of letters searching for your handwriting. Now that we know you have been ill, please do let some one send us a line to our next address telling us how you are. What that next address may be we do not yet know, as our final movements are a little uncertain. To begin with, a trading schooner, the *Equator*, will come along some time in the first part of June, lie outside the harbour here and signal to us. Within forty-eight hours we shall pack up our possessions, our barrel of sauer kraut, our barrel of salt onions, our bag of cocoanuts, our native garments, our tobacco, fish hooks, red combs, and Turkey red calicoes (all the latter for trading purposes), our hand organ, photograph and painting materials, and finally our

magic lantern—all these upon a large whaleboat, and go out to the *Equator*. Lloyd, also, takes a fiddle, a guitar, a native instrument something like a banjo, called a taro-patch fiddle, and a lot of song books. We shall be carried first to one of the Gilberts, landing at Butaritari. The *Equator* is going about amongst the Gilbert group, and we have the right to keep her over when we like within reasonable limits. Finally she will leave us, and we shall have to take the chances of what happens next. We hope to see the Marshalls, the Carolines, the Fijis, Tonga and Samoa (also other islands that I do not remember), perhaps staying a little while in Sydney, and stopping on our way home to see our friends in Tahiti and the Marquesas. I am very much exercised by one thing. Louis has the most enchanting material that any one ever had in the whole world for his book, and I am afraid he is going to spoil it all. He has taken into his Scotch Stevenson head, that a stern duty lies before him, and that his book must be a sort of scientific and historical impersonal thing, comparing the different languages (of which he knows nothing, really) and the different peoples, the object being to settle the question as to whether they are of common Malay origin or not. Also to compare the Protestant and Catholic missions, etc., and the whole thing to be impersonal, leaving out all he knows of the people themselves. And I believe there is no one living who has got so near to them, or who understands them as he does. Think of a small treatise on the Polynesian races being offered to people who are dying to hear about Ori a Ori, the making of brothers with cannibals, the strange stories they told, and the extraordinary adventures that befell us:—suppose Herman Melville had given us his theories as to the Polynesian language and the probable good or evil results of the missionary influence instead of *Omoo* and *Typee*, or Kinglake * instead of *Eothen*. Louis says it is a stern sense of duty that is at the bottom of it, which is more alarming than anything else. I am so sure that you will agree with me that I am going to ask you to throw the weight of your

* The writer has omitted something here.

influence as heavily as possible in the scales with me. Please refer to the matter in the letters we shall receive at our first stopping place, otherwise Louis will spend a great deal of time in Sydney actually reading up other people's books on the Islands. What a thing it is to have a " man of genius " to deal with. It is like managing an overbred horse. Why with my own feeble hand I could write a book that the whole world would jump at. Please keep any letters of mine that contain any incidents of our wanderings. They are very exact as to facts, and Louis may, in this conscientious state of mind (indeed I am afraid he has), put nothing in his diary but statistics. Even if I thought it a desirable thing to write what he proposes, I should still think it impossible unless after we had lived and studied here some twenty years or more.

Now I am done with my complaining, and shall turn to the pleasanter paths. Louis went to one of the other islands a couple of weeks ago, quite alone, got drenched with rain and surf, rode over mountain paths—five and a half hours one day—and came back none the worse for it. To-day he goes to Molokai, the leper island. He never has a sign of hemorrhage, the air cushion is a thing of the past, and altogether he is a new man. How he will do in the English climate again I do not know, but in these latitudes he is very nearly a well man, nothing seems to do him harm but overwork. That, of course, is sometimes difficult to prevent. Now, however, the *Master* is done, we have enough money to go upon and there is no need to work at all. I must stop. My dear love to you all.

FANNY V. DE G. STEVENSON.]

TO MRS. R. L. STEVENSON

The following two letters were written during and immediately after Stevenson's trip to the noted leper settlement, the scene of Father Damien's labours, at Molokai.

Kalawao, Molokai [*May*, 1889]

DEAR FANNY,—I had a lovely sail up. Captain Cameron and Mr. Gilfillan, both born in the States, yet the first

still with a strong Highland, and the second still with a strong Lowland accent, were good company; the night was warm, the victuals plain but good. Mr. Gilfillan gave me his berth, and I slept well, though I heard the sisters sick in the next stateroom, poor souls. Heavy rolling woke me in the morning; I turned in all standing, so went right on the upper deck. The day was on the peep out of a low morning bank, and we were wallowing along under stupendous cliffs. As the lights brightened, we could see certain abutments and buttresses on their front where wood clustered and grass grew brightly. But the whole brow seemed quite impassable, and my heart sank at the sight. Two thousand feet of rock making 19° (the Captain guesses) seemed quite beyond my powers. However, I had come so far; and, to tell you the truth, I was so cowed with fear and disgust that I dared not go back on the adventure in the interests of my own self-respect. Presently we came up with the leper promontory: lowland, quite bare and bleak and harsh, a little town of wooden houses, two churches, a landing-stair, all unsightly, sour, northerly, lying athwart the sunrise, with the great wall of the pali cutting the world out on the south. Our lepers were sent on the first boat, about a dozen, one poor child very horrid, one white man, leaving a large grown family behind him in Honolulu, and then into the second stepped the sisters and myself. I do not know how it would have been with me had the sisters not been there. My horror of the horrible is about my weakest point; but the moral loveliness at my elbow blotted all else out; and when I found that one of them was crying, poor soul, quietly under her veil, I cried a little myself; then I felt as right as a trivet, only a little crushed to be there so uselessly. I thought it was a sin and a shame she should feel unhappy; I turned round to her, and said something like this: "Ladies, God Himself is here to give you welcome. I'm sure it is good for me to be beside you; I hope it will be blessed to me; I thank you for myself and the good you do me." It seemed to cheer her up; but indeed I had scarce said it when we were at the landing-

stairs, and there was a great crowd, hundreds of (God save us !) pantomime masks in poor human flesh, waiting to receive the sisters and the new patients.

Every hand was offered : I had gloves, but I had made up my mind on the boat's voyage *not* to give my hand ; that seemed less offensive than the gloves. So the sisters and I went up among that crew, and presently I got aside (for I felt I had no business there) and set off on foot across the promontory, carrying my wrap and the camera. All horror was quite gone from me : to see these dread creatures smile and look happy was beautiful. On my way through Kalaupapa I was exchanging cheerful *alohas* with the patients coming galloping over on their horses ; I was stopping to gossip at house-doors ; I was happy, only ashamed of myself that I was here for no good. One woman was pretty, and spoke good English, and was infinitely engaging and (in the old phrase) towardly ; she thought I was the new white patient ; and when she found I was only a visitor, a curious change came in her face and voice—the only sad thing, morally sad, I mean—that I met that morning. But for all that, they tell me none want to leave. Beyond Kalaupapa the houses became rare ; dry stone dykes, grassy, stony land, one sick pandanus ; a dreary country ; from overhead in the little clinging wood shogs of the pali chirruping of birds fell ; the low sun was right in my face ; the trade blew pure and cool and delicious ; I felt as right as ninepence, and stopped and chatted with the patients whom I still met on their horses, with not the least disgust. About half-way over, I met the superintendent (a leper) with a horse for me, and O, wasn't I glad ! But the horse was one of those curious, dogged, cranky brutes that always dully want to go somewhere else, and my traffic with him completed my crushing fatigue. I got to the guest-house, an empty house with several rooms, kitchen, bath, etc. There was no one there, and I let the horse go loose in the garden, lay down on the bed, and fell asleep.

Dr. Swift woke me and gave me breakfast, then I came

back and slept again while he was at the dispensary, and he woke me for dinner; and I came back and slept again, and he woke me about six for supper; and then in about an hour I felt tired again, and came up to my solitary guest-house, played the flageolet, and am now writing to you. As yet, you see, I have seen nothing of the settlement, and my crushing fatigue (though I believe that was moral and a measure of my cowardice) and the doctor's opinion make me think the pali hopeless. "You don't look a strong man," said the doctor; "but are you sound?" I told him the truth; then he said it was out of the question, and if I were to get up at all, I must be carried up. But, as it seems, men as well as horses continually fall on this ascent: the doctor goes up with a change of clothes—it is plain that to be carried would in itself be very fatiguing to both mind and body; and I should then be at the beginning of thirteen miles of mountain road to be ridden against time. How should I come through? I hope you will think me right in my decision: I mean to stay, and shall not be back in Honolulu till Saturday, June first. You must all do the best you can to make ready.

Dr. Swift has a wife and an infant son, beginning to toddle and run, and they live here as composed as brick and mortar—at least the wife does, a Kentucky German, a fine enough creature, I believe, who was quite amazed at the sisters shedding tears! How strange is mankind! Gilfillan too, a good fellow I think, and far from a stupid, kept up his hard Lowland Scottish talk in the boat while the sister was covering her face; but I believe he knew, and did it (partly) in embarrassment, and part perhaps in mistaken kindness. And that was one reason, too, why I made my speech to them. Partly, too, I did it, because I was ashamed to do so, and remembered one of my golden rules, "When you are ashamed to speak, speak up at once.' But, mind you, that rule is only golden with strangers; with your own folks, there are other considerations. This is a strange place to be in. A bell has been sounded at intervals while I wrote, now all is still but a musical humming of the sea, not unlike the sound of tele-

graph wires; the night is quite cool and pitch dark, with a small fine rain; one light over in the leper settlement, one cricket whistling in the garden, my lamp here by my bedside, and my pen cheeping between my inky fingers.

Next day, lovely morning, slept all night, 80° in the shade, strong, sweet Anaho trade-wind.

LOUIS.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Honolulu, June, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—I am just home after twelve days' journey to Molokai, seven of them at the leper settlement, where I can only say that the sight of so much courage, cheerfulness, and devotion stung me too high to mind the infinite pity and horror of the sights. I used to ride over from Kalawao to Kalaupapa (about three miles across the promontory, the cliff-wall, ivied with forest and yet inaccessible from steepness, on my left), go to the Sisters' home, which is a miracle of neatness, play a game of croquet with seven leper girls (90° in the shade), get a little old-maid meal served me by the Sisters, and ride home again, tired enough, but not too tired. The girls all have dolls, and love dressing them. You who know so many ladies delicately clad, and they who know so many dressmakers, please make it known it would be an acceptable gift to send scraps for doll dressmaking to the Reverend Sister Maryanne, Bishop Home, Kalaupapa, Molokai, Hawaiian Islands.

I have seen sights that cannot be told, and heard stories that cannot be repeated: yet I never admired my poor race so much, nor (strange as it may seem) loved life more than in the settlement. A horror of moral beauty broods over the place: that's like bad Victor Hugo, but it is the only way I can express the sense that lived with

me all these days. And this even though it was in great part Catholic, and my sympathies flew never with so much difficulty as towards Catholic virtues. The passbook kept with heaven stirs me to anger and laughter. One of the sisters calls the place "the ticket office to heaven." Well, what is the odds? They do their darg, and do it with kindness and efficiency incredible; and we must take folks' virtues as we find them, and love the better part. Of old Damien, whose weaknesses and worse perhaps I heard fully, I think only the more. It was a European peasant: dirty, bigoted, untruthful, unwise, tricky, but superb with generosity, residual candour and fundamental good-humour: convince him he had done wrong (it might take hours of insult) and he would undo what he had done and like his corrector better. A man, with all the grime and paltriness of mankind, but a saint and hero all the more for that. The place as regards scenery is grand, gloomy, and bleak. Mighty mountain walls descending sheer along the whole face of the island into a sea unusually deep; the front of the mountain ivied and furred with clinging forest, one viridescent cliff: about half-way from east to west, the low, bare, stony promontory edged in between the cliff and the ocean; the two little towns (Kalawao and Kalaupapa) seated on either side of it, as bare almost as bathing machines upon a beach; and the population—gorgons and chimaeras dire. All this tear of the nerves I bore admirably; and the day after I got away, rode twenty miles along the opposite coast and up into the mountains: they call it twenty, I am doubtful of the figures: I should guess it nearer twelve; but let me take credit for what residents allege; and I was riding again the day after, so I need say no more about health. Honolulu does not agree with me at all: I am always out of sorts there, with slight headache, blood to the head, etc. I had a good deal of work to do and did it with miserable difficulty; and yet all the time I have been gaining strength, as you see, which is highly encouraging. By the time I am done with this cruise I shall have the material for a very singular

book of travels: names of strange stories and characters, cannibals, pirates, ancient legends, old Polynesian poetry,—never was so generous a farrago. I am going down now to get the story of a shipwrecked family, who were fifteen months on an island with a murderer: there is a specimen. The Pacific is a strange place; the nineteenth century only exists there in spots; all round, it is a no man's land of the ages, a stir-about of epochs and races, barbarisms and civilisations, virtues and crimes.

It is good of you to let me stay longer, but if I had known how ill you were, I should be now on my way home. I had chartered my schooner and made all arrangements before (at last) we got definite news. I feel highly guilty; I should be back to insult and worry you a little. Our address till further notice is to be c/o R. Towns & Co., Sydney. That is final: I only got the arrangement made yesterday; but you may now publish it abroad.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To James Payn

The following was written to his old friend of *Cornhill Magazine* days, Mr. James Payn, on receiving in Hawaii news of that gentleman's ill-health and increasing deafness.

Honolulu, H.I., June 13th, 1889

My dear James Payn,—I get sad news of you here at my offsetting for further voyages: I wish I could say what I feel. Sure there was never any man less deserved this calamity; for I have heard you speak time and again, and I remember nothing that was unkind, nothing that was untrue, nothing that was not helpful, from your lips. It is the ill-talkers that should hear no more. God knows, I know no word of consolation; but I do feel your trouble. You are the more open to letters now; let me talk to you for two pages. I have nothing but happiness to tell; and you may bless God you are a man so sound-hearted that (even in the freshness of your calamity) I can come

to you with my own good fortune unashamed and secure of sympathy. It is a good thing to be a good man, whether deaf or whether dumb; and of all our fellow-craftsmen (whom yet they count a jealous race), I never knew one but gave you the name of honesty and kindness: come to think of it gravely, this is better than the finest hearing. We are all on the march to deafness, blindness, and all conceivable and fatal disabilities; we shall not all get there with a report so good. My good news is a health astonishingly reinstated. This climate; these voyagings; these landfalls at dawn; new islands peaking from the morning bank; new forested harbours; new passing alarms of squalls and surf; new interests of gentle natives,—the whole tale of my life is better to me than any poem.

I am fresh just now from the leper settlement of Molokai, playing croquet with seven leper girls, sitting and yarning with old, blind, leper beachcombers in the hospital, sickened with the spectacle of abhorrent suffering and deformation amongst the patients, touched to the heart by the sight of lovely and effective virtues in their helpers: no stranger time have I ever had, nor any so moving. I do not think it a little thing to be deaf, God knows, and God defend me from the same!—but to be a leper, or one of the self-condemned, how much more awful! and yet there's a way there also. "There are Molokais everywhere," said Mr. Dutton, Father Damien's dresser; you are but new landed in yours; and my dear and kind adviser, I wish you, with all my soul, that patience and courage which you will require. Think of me meanwhile on a trading schooner, bound for the Gilbert Islands, thereafter for the Marshalls, with a diet of fish and cocoa-nut before me; bound on a cruise of—well, of investigation to what islands we can reach, and to get (some day or other) to Sydney, where a letter addressed to the care of R. Towns & Co. will find me sooner or later; and if it contain any good news, whether of your welfare or the courage with which you bear the contrary, will do me good.—Yours affectionately (although so near a stranger),

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Honolulu, June, 1889

My dear Mother,—Herewith goes a copy of my first letter from the leper settlement; my second, that is to say my diary, is too long to copy, as it runs to near forty pp. I can only tell you briefly that I was a week in the settlement, hag-ridden by horrid sights but really inspired with the sight of so much goodness in the helpless and so much courage and unconsciousness in the sick. The Bishop Home (the Sisters' place) is perfect; I went there most days to play croquet with the poor patients—think of a game of croquet with seven little lepers, and the thermometer sometimes ninety in the shade! I rode there and back, and used to have a little old-maid meal prepared for me alone by the sisters; and though I was often deadly tired, I was never the worse. The girls enjoyed the game a good deal, and the honour and glory of a clean Laole gentleman for playmate yet more. They were none of them badly disfigured, but some of the bystanders were dreadful; but indeed I have seen sights to turn any man's hair white. The croquet helped me a bit, as I felt I was not quite doing nothing; Sister Maryanne wanted me to sit down the second day, and only tell the girls; I said "they would not enjoy that"—"Ah," said she, with a smiling eye, "you say that, but the truth is you enjoy playing yourself!" And so I did. When I came on board the *Mokolii* (little 40-ton steamer) to leave, I had no proper pass and was refused entrance. I saw some very remarkable fire-works, I can tell you, for I had had enough and to spare of the distressful country. But it was all made right; the captain took me ashore the same evening at the north end of the island, gave me a mount, introduced me to an innumerable Irish family where I had supper and a bed, and gave me a horse and a mounted guide next day, with whom I rode twenty miles to Mr. Meyer's house. The next day, I had another ride, a mighty rough drive over a kind of road to the landing place; caught the *Mokolii* again, and was in Honolulu

the morning after about nine, very sunburnt and rudely well. How is that for activity and rustic strength?

Grace is not invariable but (I may say) frequent; and when not forgotten, is (ahem!) very well said. Joe, Lloyd and I are getting up music; guitar, taropatch, flageolet and voice for the show. Le bon Damien is to give us a choice of his comic slides; he has given us already a complete set of the life of Christ; we have a fine magic lantern. Foo goes with us. He is quite brightened up by the decision, which was come to in a long talk under the trees at Damien's,—D, Mrs D, and F piping up in Chinese with remarkable lyrical effect, and I sitting by and enjoying the concert. Ah Foo is death on Damien; but indeed we all exceedingly like him; he reminds us of Colvin in many ways, which you know is a big word for us. Joe's debts are getting thinner; Tahiti [lennade?] is square, and genteel, but languid.

The *Cormorant* is gone, to our great loss; they made us a hammock ere they left, and arranged for the relieving ship, the *Espiègle*, to make the others. Was at a school examination yesterday (girls' school); it is a plain-looking race; more pretty girls in the little box at Tautira than in all this big hall; but they sang, and recited, and played the piano, like any European school and for the singing (and the recitation too) far away better. Must dry up. Much love.—Ever afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Lady Taylor

Honolulu, June 19th, 1889

My dear Lady Taylor,—Our new home, the *Equator*, trading schooner, rides at the buoy to-night, and we are for sea shortly. All your folk of the Roost held us for phantoms and things of the night from our first appearance; but I do wish you would try to believe in our continued existence, as flesh and blood obscurely tossed in the Pacific, or walking coral shores, and in our affection,

which is more constant than becomes the breasts of such absconders. My good health does not cease to be wonderful to myself: Fanny is better in these warm places; it is the very thing for Lloyd; and in the matter of interest, the spice of life, etc., words cannot depict what fun we have. Try to have a little more patience with the fugitives, and think of us now and again among the Gilberts, where we ought to be about the time when you receive this scrap. They make no great figure on the atlas, I confess; but you will see the name there, if you look—which I wish you would, and try to conceive us as still extant. We all send the kindest remembrances to all of you; please make one of the girls write us the news to the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, where we hope to bring up about the end of the year—or later. Do not forget yours affectionately,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO SIDNEY COLVIN

Stevenson and his party sailed accordingly on the trading schooner, *Equator*, "on a certain bright June day in 1889," for the Gilbert Islands, a scattered group of atolls in the western Pacific. Their expectation was to come back into civilisation again by way of the Carolines, Manila, and the China ports; but instead of this, circumstances which occurred to change the trader's course took them southwards to Samoa, where they arrived in December of the same year. Their second voyage was thus of a six months' duration; in the course of it they spent two periods of about six weeks each on land, first at one and then at another of the two island capitals, Butaritari and Apemama. The following letter is the first which reached Stevenson's friends from this part of his voyage, and was written in two instalments, the first from on board the *Equator* in the lagoon of the island of Apaiang; the second, six weeks later, from the settlement on shore at Apemama, which the king, his friend Tembinoka, allowed him and his party to occupy during their stay. The account of this stay at Apemama and of the character of the king is far the most interesting and attractive part of the volume called *In the South Seas*, which was the literary result of these voyages.

Schooner Equator, *Apaiang Lagoon,*
August 22nd, 1889

MY DEAR COLVIN,—The missionary ship is outside the reef trying (vainly) to get in; so I may have a chance

to get a line off. I am glad to say I shall be home by June next for the summer, or we shall know the reason why. For God's sake be well and jolly for the meeting. I shall be, I believe, a different character from what you have seen this long while. This cruise is up to now a huge success, being interesting, pleasant, and profitable. The beachcomber is perhaps the most interesting character here; the natives are very different, on the whole, from Polynesians: they are moral, stand-offish (for good reasons), and protected by a dark tongue. It is delightful to meet the few Hawaiians (mostly missionaries) that are dotted about, with their Italian *brio* and their ready friendliness. The whites are a strange lot, many of them good, kind, pleasant fellows; others quite the lowest I have ever seen in the slums of cities. I wish I had time to narrate to you the doings and character of three white murderers (more or less proven) I have met. One, the only undoubted assassin of the lot, quite gained my affection in his big home out of a wreck, with his New Hebrides wife in her savage turban of hair and yet a perfect lady, and his three adorable little girls in Rob Roy Macgregor dresses, dancing to the hand organ, performing circus on the floor with startling effects of nudity, and curling up together on a mat to sleep, three sizes, three attitudes, three Rob Roy dresses, and six little clenched fists: the murderer meanwhile brooding and gloating over his chicks, till your whole heart went out to him; and yet his crime on the face of it was dark; disembowelling, in his own house, an old man of seventy, and him drunk.

It is lunch-time, I see, and I must close up with my warmest love to you. I wish you were here to sit upon me when required. Ah! if you were but a good sailor! I will never leave the sea, I think; it is only there that a Briton lives: my poor grandfather, it is from him I inherit the taste, I fancy, and he was round many islands in his day; but I, please God, shall beat him at that before the recall is sounded. Would you be surprised to learn that I contemplate becoming a ship-owner? I do, but it is a secret. Life is far better fun than people dream who

fall asleep among the chimney stacks and telegraph wires.

Love to Henry James and others near.—Ever yours, my dear fellow,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

Equator Town, Apemama, October, 1889

No *Morning Star* came, however; and so now I try to send this to you by the schooner *J. L. Tiernan*. We have been about a month ashore, camping out in a kind of town the king set up for us: on the idea that I was really a "big chief" in England. He dines with us sometimes, and sends up a cook for a share of our meals when he does not come himself. This sounds like high living! alas, undeceive yourself. Salt junk is the mainstay; a low island, except for cocoanuts, is just the same as a ship at sea: brackish water, no supplies, and very little shelter. The king is a great character—a thorough tyrant, very much of a gentleman, a poet, a musician, a historian, or perhaps rather more a genealogist—it is strange to see him lying in his house among a lot of wives (nominal wives) writing the History of Apemama in an account-book; his description of one of his own songs, which he sang to me himself, as "about sweethearts, and trees, and the sea—and no true, all-the-same lie," seems about as compendious a definition of lyric poetry as a man could ask. Tembinoka is here the great attraction: all the rest is heat and tedium and villainous dazzle, and yet more villainous mosquitoes. We are like to be here, however, many a long week before we get away, and then whither? A strange trade this voyaging: so vague, so bound-down, so helpless. Fanny has been planting some vegetables, and we have actually onions and radishes coming up: ah, onion-despiser, were you but a while in a low island, how your heart would leap at sight of a coster's barrow! I think I could shed tears over a dish of turnips. No doubt we shall all be glad to say farewell to low islands—I had near said forever. They are very tame; and I

begin to read up the directory and pine for an island with a profile, a running brook, or were it only a well among the rocks. The thought of a mango came to me early this morning and set my greed on edge ; but you do not know what a mango is, so——.

I have been thinking a great deal of you and the Monument of late, and even tried to get my thoughts into a poem, hitherto without success. God knows how you are : I begin to weary dreadfully to see you—well, in nine months, I hope ; but that seems a long time. I wonder what has befallen me too, that flimsy part of me that lives (or dwindles) in the public mind ; and what has befallen *The Master*, and what kind of a Box the Merry Box has been found. It is odd to know nothing of all this. We had an old woman to do devil-work for you about a month ago, in a Chinaman's house on Apaiang (August 23rd or 24th). You should have seen the crone with a noble masculine face, like that of an old crone [*sic*], a body like a man's (naked all but the feathery female girdle), knotting cocoanut leaves and muttering spells : Fanny and I, and the good captain of the *Equator*, and the Chinaman and his native wife and sister-in-law, all squatting on the floor about the sibyl ; and a crowd of dark faces watching from behind her shoulder (she sat right in the doorway) and tittering aloud with strange, appalled, embarrassed laughter at each fresh adjuration. She informed us you were in England, not travelling and now no longer sick ; she promised us a fair wind the next day, and we had it, so I cherish the hope she was as right about Sidney Colvin. The ship-owning has rather petered out since I last wrote, and a good many other plans beside.

Health ? Fanny very so-so ; I pretty right upon the whole, and getting through plenty work : I know not quite how, but it seems to me not bad and in places funny.

South Sea Yarns :

1. *The Wrecker*	by	R. L. S.
2. *The Pearl Fisher*		and
3. *The Beachcombers*		Lloyd O.

The Pearl Fisher, part done, lies in Sydney. It is *The Wrecker* we are now engaged upon: strange ways of life, I think, they set forth: things that I can scarce touch upon, or even not at all, in my travel book; and the yarns are good, I do believe. *The Pearl Fisher* is for the *New York Ledger*: the yarn is a kind of Monte Cristo one. *The Wrecker* is the least good as a story, I think; but the characters seem to me good. *The Beachcombers* is more sentimental. These three scarce touch the outskirts of the life we have been viewing; a hot-bed of strange characters and incidents: Lord, how different from Europe or the Pallid States! Farewell. Heaven knows when this will get to you. I burn to be in Sydney and have news.

R. L. S.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Schooner Equator, *at Sea* 240 *miles from Samoa*,
Sunday Dec. 1st, 1889

My dear Mother,—We are drawing (we fondly hope) to the close of another voyage like that from Tahiti to Hawaii; we sailed from Butaritari on the 4th November, and since then have lain becalmed under cataracts of rain, or kicked about in purposeless squalls. We were sixteen souls in this small schooner, eleven in the cabin; our confinement and overcrowding in the wet weather was excessive; we lost our foretopmast in a squall; the sails were continually being patched (we had but the one suit) and with all attention we lost the jibtopsail almost entirely and the staysail and mainsail are far through. To complete the discomfort, we have carried a very mild weatherglass; a daily fall of 15-hundredths in four hours, followed by a corresponding rise, and on one occasion accompanied by the fall of the thermometer to 79° at noon, kept us on the qui-vive. I wonder are you already so far out of key with the South Seas, that 79° at noon will seem warm to you? You should have seen the great coats

out! I myself wore two wool undershirts, a knitted waistcoat—the gift of the King of Apemama—and a flannel blazer; and I was seriously thinking of a flannel shirt, when the cold let up. My birthday was a great event; Mr. Rich, the agent of the firm at Butaritari, who makes on this trip one of the eleven beings in the cabin, had his on the twelfth; so we had two days festivity,—champagne, music, the capture of sharks, dolphins and skipjack—mighty welcome additions to our table. Ah Fu (at my elbow in the traderoom door) begs me to add that the little land birds joined the ship and stayed some twenty hours. The log says: 13th, throughout this day dead calm with heavy rain; sometimes very light westerly airs; and very easterly current. Of course we had no observation, but our position next day was 179° 35′ E, 6° 58′ N, which could not be far out, as that was a calm also. On the evening of my birthday, all hands came in the cabin to make me a compliment; the long American sailor (called *The Fisherman's Child*, after a doleful ditty that he sings) was at the wheel; compared, Ta Toma, tall powerful Hawaiian, about twenty; Teu Tau, Apaiang Islander, perhaps 13; Charlie Selth, San Franciscan, of Scotch origin, and very like our Agnes, 15; La, Honolulu stowaway, perhaps 13; Georgie (called George Muggery Bowyer, Esq.) Hawaiian, the ship's infant, age, perhaps 9—his jacket shrunk almost up to his nipples, his little breeches (once they were trousers) leaving bare his knees below and a part of his hips above; how they stayed on, nobody can guess. Both marines of the after guard were at table, Fanny, Lloyd, Joe, and I; Captain Denis Reid, Greenock, 25; Adolf Rick, Galician, born in Prussia, 43; Paul Leonard, 28, Prussian, known as the *Passenger to Waikiki*—towards which island, like a will o' the wisp, he has been sailing in this *Equator* for nine weeks, and will sail at least half as many more, and yet he has twice sighted it, and then the wind failed, the westerly current took charge, and farewell Waikiki! Tom Thomson, but his name is Ole Somethingson, Norwegian, our mate, the tavern keeper on Waikiki, thirty. In the background, our cook and

steward, the great Ah Fu, Sana (?) China, and Murray Macallum, son of a Free kirk minister on the Clyde—Mr. Swan has been in his father's house—aged maybe 20. To this congregation, in the small, lamplighted, tossing cabin, nine feet square, with the compass and the binnacle lantern inside on a bracket on the after bulkhead, and the steersman looking down on us through an eye-shaped aperture, like a narrow loophole—add the incessant uproar of the tropic rain, the dripping leaks, the slush on the floor, and the general sense that we were nowhere in particular and drifting anywhere at large; and there is my 39th birthday! Charlie Selth was the spokesman of the crew, and made a neat little speech of a sentence, and you should have seen the row of brown faces, tailing down from Ta Toma to George. Georgie comes aft every morning to get from the Captain his "Boia"—a thrashing; it is quite solemnly gone through on both sides, and I must candidly declare is the only duty the child has, or at least attends to. From this word, the family name of Bowyer has been deduced by the Heralds of the *Equator;* the middle name "Muggery" is (something like) a native word; and the whole thing gives very much the effect of an heir to a baronetcy.

We had a fine alert once; a p.d. reef ahead — three positions indicated, our own disputed—a very heavy sea running—the boats cleared and supplied with bread and water, our little packets made (medicines, papers, and woollen clothes) and the poor passenger for Waikiki trying rather ruefully to insure his little all which was on board. It was rather fine going to bed that night; though had we struck the reef the boat voyage of four or five hundred miles would have been no joke.

Fanny has stood the hardships of this rough cruise wonderfully; but I do not think I could enforce her to another of the same. I've been first rate, though I am now done for lack of green food. Joe is, I fear, really ill; and Lloyd has bad sores in his leg. We shall send Joe on to Sydney by the first steamer; and Lloyd, Fanny and I shall stay on awhile (time quite vague) in Samoa.

Write to Sydney. We shall turn up in England by May or June.

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

The following, written in the last days of the sail southwards from the Gilberts to Samoa, contains the full plan of the South Sea book as it had now been conceived. In the issue, Part I. (so far as I know) was never written; Parts II. and III. appeared serially in the New York *Sun*, and were reprinted with corrections as Parts I. and II. in the volume called *In the South Seas*: Part IV. was never written; Part V. was written and appears as Part III. in the same volume; Part VI. (and far the most successful) closes the volume as Part IV; Part VII. developed itself into *A Footnote to History*. The verses at the end of this letter have been printed elsewhere (*Songs of Travel*, No. xxxvii.); but I give them here with the context, as in similar instances above. The allusion is to the two colossal images from Easter Island which used to stand under the portico to the right hand of the visitor entering the Museum, were for some years removed, and later restored to their old place.

Schooner Equator, *at Sea* 190 *miles off Samoa, Monday, December 2nd*, 1889

My dear Colvin,—We are just nearing the end of our long cruise. Rain, calms, squalls, bang—there's the foretopmast gone; rain, calm, squalls, away with the staysail; more rain, more calm, more squalls; a prodigious heavy sea all the time, and the *Equator* staggering and hovering like a swallow in a storm; and the cabin, a great square, crowded with wet human beings, and the rain avalanching on the deck, and the leaks dripping everywhere: Fanny in the midst of fifteen males, bearing up wonderfully. But such voyages are at the best a trial. We had one particularity: coming down on Winslow Reef, p.d. (position doubtful): two positions in the directory, a third (if you cared to count that) on the chart; heavy sea running, and the night due. The boats were cleared, bread put on board, and we made up our packets for a boat voyage of four or five hundred miles, and turned in,

expectant of a crash. Needless to say it did not come, and no doubt we were far to leeward. If we only had twopenceworth of wind, we might be at dinner in Apia to-morrow evening; but no such luck: here we roll, dead before a light air—and that is no point of sailing at all for a fore and aft schooner—the sun blazing overhead, thermometer 88°, four degrees above what I have learned to call South Sea temperature; but for all that, land so near, and so much grief being happily astern, we are all pretty gay on board, and have been photographing and draught-playing and sky-larking like anything. I am minded to stay not very long in Samoa and confine my studies there (as far as any one can forecast) to the history of the late war. My book is now practically modelled: if I can execute what is designed, there are few better books now extant on this globe, bar the epics, and the big tragedies, and histories, and the choice lyric poetics and a novel or so—none. But it is not executed yet; and let not him that putteth on his armour, vaunt himself. At least, nobody has had such stuff; such wild stories, such beautiful scenes, such singular intimacies, such manners and traditions, so incredible a mixture of the beautiful and horrible, the savage and civilised. I will give you here some idea of the table of contents, which ought to make your mouth water. I propose to call the book *The South Seas:* it is rather a large title, but not many people have seen more of them than I, perhaps no one—certainly no one capable of using the material.

Part I

General. "*Of schooners, islands, and maroons*"

CHAPTER I. Marine.
,, II. Contraband (smuggling, barratry, labour traffic).
,, III. The Beachcomber.
,, IV. Beachcomber stories. i. The Murder of the Chinaman. ii. Death of a Beachcomber. iii. A Character. iv. The Apia Blacksmith.

Part II. The Marquesas

CHAPTER V. Anaho. i. Arrival. ii. Death. iii. The Tapu. iv. Morals. v. Hoka.
" VI. Tai-o-hae. i. Arrival. ii. The French. iii. The Royal Family. iv. Chiefless Folk. v. The Catholics. vi. Hawaiian Missionaries.
" VII. Observations of a Long Pig. i. Cannibalism. ii. Hatiheu. iii. Frère Michel. iv. Taahauku and Atuona. v. The Vale of Atuona. vi. Moipu. vii. Captain Hati.

Part III. The Dangerous Archipelago

" VIII. The Group.
" IX. A House to let in a Low Island.
" X. A Paumotuan Funeral. i. The Funeral ii. Tales of the Dead.

Part IV. Tahiti

" XI. Tautira.
" XII. Village Government in Tahiti.
" XIII. A Journey in Quest of Legends.
" XIV. Legends and Songs.
" XV. Life in Eden.
" XVI. Note on the French Regimen.

Part V. The Eight Islands

" XVII. A note on Missions.
" XVIII. The Kona Coast of Hawaii. i. Hookena. ii. A Ride in the Forest. iii. A Law Case. iv. The City of Refuge. v. The Lepers.
" XIX. Molokai. i. A week in the Precinct. ii. History of the Leper Settlement. iii. The Molokii. iv. The Free Island.

Part VI. The Gilberts

CHAPTER XX. The Group. i. Position of Woman. ii. The Missions. iii. Devilwork. iv. Republics
" XXI. Rule and Misrule on Makin. i. Butaritari, its King and Court. ii. History of Three Kings. iii. The Drink Question.
" XXII. A Butaritarian Festival.
" XXIII. The King of Apemama. i. First Impressions. ii. Equator Town and the Palace. iii. The Three Corselets.

Part VII. Samoa

which I have not yet reached

Even as so sketched it makes sixty chapters, not less than 300 *Cornhill* pages; and I suspect not much under 500. Samoa has yet to be accounted for: I think it will be all history, and I shall work in observations on Samoan manners, under the similar heads in other Polynesian islands. It is still possible, though unlikely, that I may add a passing visit to Fiji or Tonga, or even both; but I am growing impatient to see yourself, and I do not want to be later than June of coming to England. Anyway, you see it will be a large work, and as it will be copiously illustrated, the Lord knows what it will cost. We shall return, God willing, by Sydney, Ceylon, Suez, and, I guess, Marseilles the many-masted (copyright epithet) I shall likely pause a day or two in Paris, but all that is too far ahead—although now it begins to look near—so near, and I can hear the rattle of the hansom up Endell Street and see the gates swing back, and feel myself jump out upon the Monument steps—Hosanna!—home again. My dear fellow, now that my father is done with his troubles, and 17 Heriot Row no more than a mere shell, you and that gaunt old Monument in Bloomsbury are all

that I have in view when I use the word home; some passing thoughts there may be of the rooms at Skerryvore, and the blackbirds in the chine on a May morning; but the essence is S. C. and the Museum. Suppose, by some damned accident, you were no more; well, I should return just the same, because of my mother and Lloyd, whom I now think to send to Cambridge; but all the spring would have gone out of me, and ninety per cent. of the attraction lost. I will copy for you here a copy of verses made in Apemama.

I heard the pulse of the besieging sea
Throb far away all night. I heard the wind
Fly crying, and convulse tumultuous palms.
I rose and strolled. The isle was all bright sand,
And flailing fans and shadows of the palm:
The heaven all moon, and wind, and the blind vault—
The keenest planet slain, for Venus slept.
The King, my neighbour, with his host of wives,
Slept in the precinct of the palisade:
Where single, in the wind, under the moon,
Among the slumbering cabins, blazed a fire,
Sole street-lamp and the only sentinel.
To other lands and nights my fancy turned,
To London first, and chiefly to your house,
The many-pillared and the well-beloved.
There yearning fancy lighted; there again
In the upper room I lay and heard far off
The unsleeping city murmur like a shell;
The muffled tramp of the Museum guard
Once more went by me; I beheld again
Lamps vainly brighten the dispeopled street;
Again I longed for the returning morn,
The awaking traffic, the bestirring birds,
The consentaneous trill of tiny song
That weaves round monumental cornices
A passing charm of beauty: most of all,
For your light foot I wearied, and your knock
That was the glad réveillé of my day.
Lo, now, when to your task in the great house

At morning through the portico you pass,
One moment glance where, by the pillared wall,
Far-voyaging island gods, begrimed with smoke,
Sit now unworshipped, the rude monument
Of faiths forgot and races undivined ;
Sit now disconsolate, remembering well
The priest, the victim, and the songful crowd,
The blaze of the blue noon, and that huge voice
Incessant, of the breakers on the shore.
As far as these from their ancestral shrine,
So far, so foreign, your divided friends
Wander, estranged in body, not in mind.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

Schooner Equator, *at Sea,*
Wednesday, 4th December, 1889

My dear Burlingame,—We are now about to rise, like whales, from this long dive, and I make ready a communication which is to go to you by the first mail from Samoa. How long we shall stay in that group I cannot forecast ; but it will be best still to address at Sydney, where I trust, when I shall arrive, perhaps in one month from now, more probably in two or three, to find all news.

Business.—Will you be likely to have a space in the Magazine for a serial story, which should be ready, I believe, by April, at latest by autumn ? It is called *The Wrecker ;* and in book form will appear as number 1 of *South Sea Yarns* by R. L. S. and Lloyd Osbourne. Here is the table as far as fully conceived, and indeed executed.* . . .

The story is founded on fact, the mystery I really believe to be insoluble ; the purchase of a wreck has never been handled before, no more has San Francisco. These seem all elements of success. There is, besides, a character, Jim Pinkerton, of the advertising American, on whom we

* Table of chapter headings follows.

build a good deal; and some sketches on the American merchant marine, opium smuggling in Honolulu, etc. It should run to (about) three hundred pages of my MS. I would like to know if this tale smiles upon you, if you will have a vacancy, and what you will be willing to pay. It will of course be copyright in both the States and England. I am a little anxious to have it tried serially, as it tests the interest of the mystery.

Pleasure.—We have had a fine time in the Gilbert group, though four months on low islands, which involves low diet, is a largeish order; and my wife is rather down. I am myself, up to now, a pillar of health, though our long and vile voyage of calms, squalls, cataracts of rain, sails carried away, foretopmasts lost, boats cleared and packets made on the approach of a p.d. reef, etc., has cured me of salt brine, and filled me with a longing for beef steak and mangoes not to be depicted. The interest has been immense. Old King Tembinoka of Apemama, the Napoleon of the group, poet, tyrant, altogether a man of mark, gave me the woven corselets of his grandfather, his father and his uncle, and, what pleased me more, told me their singular story, then all manner of strange tales, facts, and experiences for my South Sea book, which should be a Tearer, Mr. Burlingame: no one at least has had such stuff.

We are now engaged in the hell of a dead calm, the heat is cruel—it is the only time when I suffer from heat: I have nothing on but a pair of serge trousers, and a singlet without sleeves of Oxford gauze—O, yes, and a red sash about my waist; and yet as I sit here in the cabin, sweat streams from me. The rest are on deck under a bit of awning; we are not much above a hundred miles from port, and we might as well be in Kamchatka. However, I should be honest; this is the first calm I have endured without the added bane of a heavy swell, and the intoxicated blue-bottle wallowings and knockings of the helpless ship.

I wonder how you liked the end of *The Master;* that was the hardest job I ever had to do; did I do it?

My wife begs to be remembered to yourself and Mrs.

Burlingame. Remember all of us to all friends, particularly Low, in case I don't get a word through for him.—I am, yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

The following was written soon after the termination of the voyage of the *Equator* and Stevenson's first landing in Samoa, where he was engaged in collecting materials for the account (then intended to be the concluding part of his great projected South Sea book) of the war and hurricane of the previous year.

Samoa [December, 1889]

MY DEAR BAXTER,— . . . I cannot return until I have seen either Tonga or Fiji or both: and I must not leave here till I have finished my collections on the war—a very interesting bit of history, the truth often very hard to come at, and the search (for me) much complicated by the German tongue, from the use of which I have desisted (I suppose) these fifteen years. The last two days I have been mugging with a dictionary from five to six hours a day; besides this, I have to call upon, keep sweet, and judiciously interview all sorts of persons—English, Ame.ican, German, and Samoan. It makes a hard life; above all, as after every interview I have to come and get my notes straight on the nail. I believe I should have got my facts before the end of January, when I shall make for Tonga or Fiji. I am down right in the hurricane season; but they had so bad a one last year, I don't imagine there will be much of an edition this. Say that I get to Sydney some time in April, and I shall have done well, and be in a position to write a very singular and interesting book, or rather two; for I shall begin, I think, with a separate opuscule on the Samoan Trouble, about as long as *Kidnapped*, not very interesting, but valuable—and a thing proper to be done. And then, hey! for the big South Sea Book: a devil of a big one, and full of the finest sport.

This morning as I was going along to my breakfast

a little before seven, reading a number of *Blackwood's Magazine*, I was startled by a soft *talofa, alii* (note for my mother: they are quite courteous here in the European style, quite unlike Tahiti), right in my ear: it was Mataafa coming from early mass in his white coat and white linen kilt, with three fellows behind him. Mataafa is the nearest thing to a hero in my history, and really a fine fellow; plenty sense, and the most dignified, quiet, gentle manners. Talking of *Blackwood*—a file of which I was lucky enough to find here in the lawyer's—Mrs. Oliphant seems in a staggering state: from the *Wrong Box* to *The Master* I scarce recognise either my critic or myself. I gather that *The Master* should do well, and at least that notice is agreeable reading. I expect to be home in June: you will have gathered that I am pretty well. In addition to my labours, I suppose I walk five or six miles a day, and almost every day I ride up and see Fanny and Lloyd, who are in a house in the bush with Ah Fu. I live in Apia for history's sake with Moors, an American trader Day before yesterday I was arrested and fined for riding fast in the street, which made my blood bitter, as the wife of the manager of the German Firm has twice almost ridden me down, and there seems none to say her nay. The Germans have behaved pretty badly here, but not in all ways so ill as you may have gathered: they were doubtless much provoked; and if the insane Knappe had not appeared upon the scene, might have got out of the muddle with dignity. I write along without rhyme or reason, as things occur to me.

I hope from my outcries about printing you do not think I want you to keep my news or letters in a Blue Beard closet. I like all friends to hear of me; they all should if I had ninety hours in the day, and strength for all of them; but you must have gathered how hard worked I am, and you will understand I go to bed a pretty tired man.

29th December [1889]

To-morrow (Monday, I won't swear to my day of the month; this is the Sunday between Christmas and New

Year) I go up the coast with Mr. Clarke, one of the London Society missionaries, in a boat to examine schools, see Tamasese, etc. Lloyd comes to photograph. Pray Heaven we have good weather; this is the rainy season; we shall be gone four or five days; and if the rain keep off, I shall be glad of the change; if it rain, it will be beastly. This explains still further how hard pressed I am, as the mail will be gone ere I return, and I have thus lost the days I meant to write in. I have a boy, Henry, who interprets and copies for me, and is a great nuisance. He said he wished to come to me in order to learn "long explessions." Henry goes up along with us, and as I am not fond of him, he may before the trip is over hear some "stlong explessions." I am writing this on the back balcony at Moors'; palms and a hill like the hill of Kinnoull looking in at me; myself lying on the floor, and (like the parties in Handel's song) "clad in robes of virgin white"; the ink is dreadful, the heat delicious, a fine going breeze in the palms, and from the other side of the house the sudden angry splash and roar of the Pacific on the reef, where the warships are still piled from last year's hurricane, some under water, one high and dry upon her side, the strangest figure of a ship was ever witnessed; the narrow bay there is full of ships; the men-of-war covered with sail after the rains, and (especially the German ship, which is fearfully and awfully top heavy) rolling almost yards in, in what appears to be calm water.

Samoa, Apia at least, is far less beautiful than the Marquesas or Tahiti: a more gentle scene, gentler acclivities, a tamer face of nature; and this much aided, for the wanderer, by the great German plantations with their countless regular avenues of palms. The island has beautiful rivers, of about the bigness of our waters in the Lothians, with pleasant pools and waterfalls and overhanging verdure, and often a great volume of sound, so that once I thought I was passing near a mill, and it was only the voice of the river. I am not specially attracted by the people; but they are courteous; the women very attractive, and dress lovely; the men purpose-

like, well set up, tall, lean, and dignified. As I write, the breeze is brisking up, doors are beginning to slam and shutters; a strong draught sweeps round the balcony; it looks doubtful for to-morrow. Here I shut up.—Ever your affectionate

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO LADY TAYLOR

This letter contains the first announcement of the purchase of the Vailima estate (not yet so named). Sir Percy Shelley had died in the previous December.

Apia, Samoa, Jan. 20th, 1890

MY DEAR LADY TAYLOR,—I shall hope to see you in some months from now, when I come home—to break up my establishment—I know no diminutive of the word. Your daughters cast a spell upon me; they were always declaring I was a winged creature and would vanish into the uttermost isle; and they were right, and I have made my preparations. I am now the owner of an estate upon Upolu, some two or three miles behind and above Apia; three streams, two waterfalls, a great cliff, an ancient native fort, a view of the sea and lowlands, or (to be more precise) several views of them in various directions, are now mine. It would be affectation to omit a good many head of cattle; above all as it required much diplomacy to have them thrown in, for the gentleman who sold to me was staunch. Besides all this, there is a great deal more forest than I have any need for; or to be plain the whole estate is one impassable jungle, which must be cut down and through at considerable expense. Then the house has to be built; and then (as a climax) we may have to stand a siege in it in the next native war.

I do feel as if I was a coward and a traitor to desert my friends; only, my dear lady, you know what a miserable corrhyzal (is that how it is spelt?)* creature I was at home: and here I have some real health, I can walk, I can ride, I can stand some exposure, I am up with the sun, I

* Coryza (Greek κόρυζα) is the medical word for a running at the nose: the adjective is Stevenson's own.

have a real enjoyment of the world and of myself; it would be hard to go back again to England and to bed; and I think it would be very silly. I am sure it would; and yet I feel shame, and I know I am not writing like myself. I wish you knew how much I admired you, and when I think of those I must leave, how early a place your name occupies. I have not had the pleasure to know you very long; and yet I feel as if my leaving England were a special treachery to you, and my leaving you a treachery to myself. I will only ask you to try to forgive me: for I am sure I will never quite forgive myself. Somebody might write to me in the care of R. Towns & Co., Sydney, New South Wales, to tell me if you can forgive. But you will do quite right if you cannot. Only let me come and see you when we do return, or it will be a lame home-coming.

My wife suffered a good deal in our last, somewhat arduous voyage; all our party indeed suffered except myself. Fanny is now better but she is still no very famous success in the way of health.

All the while I have been writing, I have had another matter in my eye; of which I scarce like to speak: You know of course that I am thinking of Sir Percy and his widow. The news has reached me in the shape of a newspaper cutting, I have no particulars. He had a sweet, original nature; I think I liked him better than ever I should have liked his father; I am sorry he was always a little afraid of me; if I had had more chance, he would have liked me too, we had so much in common, and I valued so much his fine soul, as honest as a dog's, and the romance of him, which was like a dog's too, and like a poet's at the same time. If he had not been Shelley's son, people would have thought more of him; and yet he was the better of the two, bar verses.

Please tell my dear Ida and Una that we think much of them, as well as of your dear self, and believe me, in words which you once allowed me to use (and I was very much affected when you did so), your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

To Dr. Scott

This gentleman is the physician to whose assiduous care and kindness, as recorded in the dedication to *Underwoods*, Stevenson owed so much during his invalid years at Bournemouth.

Apia, Samoa, January 20th, 1890

My dear Scott,—Shameful indeed that you should not have heard of me before! I have now been some twenty months in the South Seas, and am (up to date) a person whom you would scarce know. I think nothing of long walks and rides: I was four hours and a half gone the other day, partly riding, partly climbing up a steep ravine. I have stood a six months' voyage on a copra schooner with about three months ashore on coral atolls, which means (except for cocoanuts to drink) no change whatever from ship's food. My wife suffered badly—it was too rough a business altogether—Lloyd suffered—and, in short, I was the only one of the party who "kept my end up."

I am so pleased with this climate that I have decided to settle; have even purchased a piece of land from three to four hundred acres, I know not which till the survey is completed, and shall only return next summer to wind up my affairs in England; thenceforth I mean to be a subject of the High Commissioner.

Now you would have gone longer yet without news of your truant patient, but that I have a medical discovery to communicate. I find I can (almost immediately) fight off a cold with liquid extract of coca; two or (if obstinate) three teaspoonfuls in the day for a variable period of from one to five days sees the cold generally to the door. I find it at once produces a glow, stops rigour, and though it makes one very uncomfortable, prevents the advance of the disease. Hearing of this influenza, it occurred to me that this might prove remedial; and perhaps a stronger exhibition—injections of cocaine, for instance—still better.

If on my return I find myself let in for this epidemic, which seems highly calculated to nip me in the bud, I shall feel very much inclined to make the experiment. See what

a gulf you may save me from if you shall have previously made it on *anima vili*, on some less important sufferer, and shall have found it worse than useless.

How is Miss Boodle and her family? Greeting to your brother and all friends in Bournemouth.—Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

After a stay of four or five weeks at Apia, during which he had fallen more and more in love with Samoa and the Samoans, Stevenson took steamer again, this time for Sydney, where he had ordered his letters to await him. This and the two following letters were written during the passage. I again print in their original place a set of verses separately published in *Songs of Travel*.

Februar den zen 1890
Dampfer Lübeck *zwischen Apia und Sydney*

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have got one delightful letter from you, and heard from my mother of your kindness in going to see her. Thank you for that: you can in no way more touch and serve me. . . . Ay, ay, it is sad to sell 17; sad and fine were the old days: when I was away in Apemama, I wrote two copies of verse about Edinburgh and the past, so ink black, so golden bright. I will send them, if I can find them, for they will say something to you, and indeed one is more than half addressed to you. This is it—

TO MY OLD COMRADES

Do you remember—can we e'er forget?—
How, in the coiled perplexities of youth,
In our wild climate, in our scowling town,
We gloomed and shivered, sorrowed, sobbed, and feared?
The belching winter wind, the missile rain,
The rare and welcome silence of the snows,
The laggard morn, the haggard day, the night,
The grimy spell of the nocturnal town,

Do you remember ?—Ah, could one forget !
As when the fevered sick that all night long
Listed the wind intone, and hear at last
The ever-welcome voice of the chanticleer
Sing in the bitter hour before the dawn.—
With sudden ardour, these desire the day :

(Here a squall sends all flying.)

So sang in the gloom of youth the bird of hope ;
So we, exulting, hearkened and desired.
For lo ! as in the palace porch of life
We huddled with chimæras, from within—
How sweet to hear !—the music swelled and fell,
And through the breach of the revolving doors
What dreams of splendour blinded us and fled !
I have since then contended and rejoiced ;
Amid the glories of the house of life
Profoundly entered, and the shrine beheld :
Yet when the lamp from my expiring eyes
Shall dwindle and recede, the voice of love
Fall insignificant on my closing ears,
What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
In our inclement city ? what return
But the image of the emptiness of youth,
Filled with the sound of footsteps and that voice
Of discontent and rapture and despair ?
So, as in darkness, from the magic lamp,
The momentary pictures gleam and fade
And perish, and the night resurges—these
Shall I remember, and then all forget.

They're pretty second-rate, but felt. I can't be bothered to copy the other.

I have bought 314½ acres of beautiful land in the bush behind Apia ; when we get the house built, the garden laid, and cattle in the place, it will be something to fall back on for shelter and food ; and if the island could stumble into political quiet, it is conceivable it might even bring a little income. . . . We range from 600 to 1500

feet, have five streams, waterfalls, precipices, profound ravines, rich tablelands, fifty head of cattle on the ground (if any one could catch them), a great view of forest, sea, mountains, the warships in the haven : really a noble place. Some day you are to take a long holiday and come and see us : it has been all planned.

With all these irons in the fire, and cloudy prospects, you may be sure I was pleased to hear a good account of business. I believed *The Master* was a sure card : I wonder why Henley thinks it grimy ; grim it is, God knows, but sure not grimy, else I am the more deceived. I am sorry he did not care for it ; I place it on the line with *Kidnapped* myself. We'll see as time goes on whether it goes above or falls below.

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The Editor of *Scribner's Magazine* had written asking him for fresh contributions, and he sends the set of verses addressed to Tembinoka, the king at Butaritari, and afterwards reprinted in *Songs of Travel*, beginning " Let us who part like brothers part like bards."

S.S. Lübeck [*between Apia and Sydney, February*] 1890

My dear Burlingame,—I desire nothing better than to continue my relation with the Magazine, to which it pleases me to hear I have been useful. The only think I have ready is the enclosed barbaric piece. As soon as I have arrived in Sydney I shall send you some photographs, a portrait of Tembinoka, perhaps a view of the palace or of the " matted men " at their singing ; also T.'s flag, which my wife designed for him : in a word, what I can do best for you. It will be thus a foretaste of my book of travels. I shall ask you to let me have, if I wish it, the use of the plates made, and to make up a little tract of the verses and illustrations, of which you might send six copies to H.M. Tembinoka, King of Apemama, *via* Butaritari, Gilbert Islands. It might be

best to send it by Crawford & Co., S.F. There is no postal service; and schooners must take it, how they may and when. Perhaps some such note as this might be prefixed:

At my departure from the island of Apemama, for which you will look in vain in most atlases, the king and I agreed, since we both set up to be in the poetical way, that we should celebrate our separation in verse. Whether or not his majesty has been true to his bargain, the laggard posts of the Pacific may perhaps inform me in six months, perhaps not before a year. The following lines represent my part of the contract, and it is hoped, by their pictures of strange manners, they may entertain a civilised audience. Nothing throughout has been invented or exaggerated; the lady herein referred to as the author's Muse, has confined herself to stringing into rhyme facts and legends that I saw or heard during two months' residence upon the island.

R. L. S.

You will have received from me a letter about *The Wrecker*. No doubt it is a new experiment for me, being disguised so much as a study of manners, and the interest turning on a mystery of the detective sort. I think there need be no hesitation about beginning it in the fall of the year. Lloyd has nearly finished his part, and I shall hope to send you very soon the MS. of about the first four-sevenths. At the same time, I have been employing myself in Samoa, collecting facts about the recent war; and I propose to write almost at once and to publish shortly a small volume, called I know not what—the War in Samoa, the Samoa Trouble, an Island War, the War of the Three Consuls, I know not—perhaps you can suggest. It was meant to be a part of my travel book; but material has accumulated on my hands until I see myself forced into volume form, and I hope it may be of use, if it come soon. I have a few photographs of the war, which will do for illustrations. It is conceivable you might wish to handle this in the Magazine, although I am inclined to think you won't, and to agree with you. But if you think otherwise, there it is. The travel letters (fifty of them) are already

contracted for in papers; these I was quite bound to let M'Clure handle, as the idea was of his suggestion, and I always felt a little sore as to one trick I played him in the matter of the end-papers. The war-volume will contain some very interesting and picturesque details: more I can't promise for it. Of course the fifty newspaper letters will be simply patches chosen from the travel volume (or volumes) as it gets written.

But you see I have in hand :—

Say half done.	1. *The Wrecker.*
Lloyd's copy half done, mine not touched.	2. *The Pearl Fisher* (a novel promised to the *Ledger*, and which will form, when it comes in book form, No. 2 of our *South Sea Yarns*).
Not begun, but all material ready.	3. The War volume.
Ditto.	4. The Big Travel Book, which includes the letters.
You know how they stand.	5. The *Ballads.*

Excusez du peu! And you see what madness it would be to make any fresh engagement. At the same time, you have *The Wrecker* and the War Volume, if you like either—or both—to keep my name in the Magazine.

It begins to look as if I should not be able to get any more ballads done this somewhile. I know the book would sell better if it were all ballads; and yet I am growing half tempted to fill up with some other verses. A good few are connected with my voyage, such as the "Home o. Tembinoka" sent herewith, and would have a sort of slight affinity to the *South Sea Ballads.* You might tell me how that strikes a stranger.

In all this, my real interest is with the travel volume, which ought to be of a really extraordinary interest. I am

sending you "Tembinoka" as he stands; but there are parts of him that I hope to better, particularly in stanzas III. and II. I scarce feel intelligent enough to try just now; and I thought at any rate you had better see it, set it up if you think well, and let me have a proof; so, at least, we shall get the bulk of it straight. I have spared you Teñkoruti, Tembaitake, Tembinatake, and other barbarous names, because I thought the dentists in the States had work enough without my assistance; but my chief's name is TEMBINOKA, pronounced, according to the present quite modern habit in the Gilberts, Tembinok'. Compare in the margin Tengkorootch; a singular new trick, setting at defiance all South Sea analogy, for nowhere else do they show even the ability, far less the will, to end a word upon a consonant. Loia is Lloyd's name, ship becomes shipé, teapot tipoté, etc. Our admirable friend Herman Melville, of whom, since I could judge, I have thought more than ever, had no ear for languages whatever: his Hapar tribe should be Hapaa, etc.

But this is of no interest to you: suffice it, you see how I am as usual up to the neck in projects, and really all likely bairns this time. When will this activity cease? Too soon for me, I dare to say.

R. L. S.

TO JAMES PAYN

February 4th, 1890, *S.S.* Lübeck

MY DEAR JAMES PAYN,—In virtue of confessions in your last, you would at the present moment, if you were along of me, be sick; and I will ask you to receive that as an excuse for my hand of write. Excuse a plain seaman if he regards with scorn the likes of you pore land-lubbers ashore now. (Reference to nautical ditty.) Which I may however be allowed to add that when eight months' mail was laid by my side one evening in Apia, and my wife and I sat up the most of the night to peruse the same—(precious indisposed we were next day in consequence)—

no letter, out of so many, more appealed to our hearts than one from the pore, stick-in-the-mud, land-lubbering, common (or garden) Londoner, James Payn. Thank you for it; my wife says, "Can't I see him when we get back to London?" I have told her the thing appeared to me within the spear of practical politix. (Why can't I spell and write like an honest, sober, god-fearing litry gent? I think it's the motion of the ship.) Here I was interrupted to play chess with the chief engineer; as I grow old, I prefer the "athletic sport of cribbage," of which (I am sure I misquote) I have just been reading in your delightful *Literary Recollections*. How you skim along, you and Andrew Lang (different as you are), and yet the only two who can keep a fellow smiling every page, and ever and again laughing out loud. I joke wi' deeficulty, I believe; I am not funny; and when I am, Mrs. Oliphant says I'm vulgar, and somebody else says (in Latin) that I'm a whore, which seems harsh and even uncalled for: I shall stick to weepers; a 5s. weeper, 2s. 6d. laughter, 1s. shocker.

My dear sir, I grow more and more idiotic; I cannot even feign sanity. Some time in the month of June a stalwart weather-beaten man, evidently of seafaring antecedents, shall be observed wending his way between the Athenæum Club and Waterloo Place. Arrived off No. 17, he shall be observed to bring his head sharply to the wind, and tack into the outer haven. "Captain Payn in the harbour?"—"Ay, ay, sir. What ship?"—"Barquentin R. L. S., nine hundred and odd days out from the port of Bournemouth, homeward bound, with yarns and curiosities."

Who was it said, "For God's sake, don't speak of it!" about Scott and his tears? He knew what he was saying. The fear of that hour is the skeleton in all our cupboards; that hour when the pastime and the livelihood go together; and—I am getting hard of hearing myself; a pore young child of forty, but new come frae my Mammy, O!

Excuse these follies, and accept the expression of all my regards.—Yours affectionately,

R. L. STEVENSON.

To Henry James

The *Solution* is a short story of Mr. Henry James, first published in a periodical and reprinted in the collection called *The Lesson of the Master* (Macmillans).

Union Club, Sydney, February 19, 1890

Here—in this excellent civilised, antipodal club smoking-room, I have just read the first part of your *Solution*. Dear Henry James, it is an exquisite art ; do not be troubled by the shadows of your French competitors : not one, not de Maupassant, could have done a thing more clean and fine ; dry in touch, but the atmosphere (as in a fine summer sunset) rich with colour and with perfume. I shall say no more ; this note is De Solutione ; except that I—that we—are all your sincere friends and hope to shake you by the hand in June.

Robert Louis Stevenson.

signed, sealed and
delivered as his act
and deed
and very thought of very thought,
this nineteenth of February in the year of our
Lord one thousand eight hundred ninety
and nothing.

To Mrs. Thomas Stevenson

Written while he was still in a white heat of indignation on behalf of Father Damien. He was not aware that Dr. Hyde's letter had been a private one, not meant for publicity, and later came to think he might have struck as effectively on behalf of Damien, without striking so fiercely against Dr. Hyde (see below, p. 314). " Damon " is the Revd. F. Damon, a missionary in Hawaii.

Union Club, Sydney, March 5, 1890

My dear Mother,—I understand the family keeps you somewhat informed. For myself I am in such a whirl of work and society, I can ill spare a moment. My health is excellent and has been here tried by abominable wet

weather, and (what's waur) dinners and lunches. As this is like to be our metropolis, I have tried to lay myself out to be sociable with an eye to yoursel'. Several niceish people have turned up: Fanny has an evening, but she is about at the end of the virtuous effort, and shrinks from the approach of any fellow creature.

Have you seen Hyde's (Dr. not Mr.) letter about Damien? That has been one of my concerns; I have an answer in the press; and have just written a difficult letter to Damon trying to prepare him for what (I fear) must be to him extremely painful. The answer is to come out as a pamphlet; of which I make of course a present to the publisher. I am not a cannibal, I would not eat the flesh of Dr. Hyde,—and it is conceivable it will make a noise in Honolulu. I have struck as hard as I knew how; nor do I think my answer can fail to do away (in the minds of all who see it) with the effect of Hyde's incredible and really villainous production. What a mercy I wasn't this man's *guest* in the *Morning Star!* I think it would have broke my heart.

Time for me to go!—I remain, with love,

R. L. S.

To Charles Baxter

Stevenson had not been long at Sydney—just long enough to write and print the *Letter to Dr. Hyde* in defence of Father Damien—when, to his heavy disappointment, he fell ill again with one of his old bad attacks of fever and hemorrhage from the lungs. It was this experience which finally determined him to settle for good on his new island property in Samoa, which at first he had thought of rather as an occasional refuge and resting-place in the intervals between future projected yachting voyages.

Union Club, Sydney, March 7th, 1890

My dear Charles,—I did not send off the enclosed before from laziness; having gone quite sick, and being a blooming prisoner here in the club, and indeed in my bedroom. I was in receipt of your letters and your orna-

mental photo, and was delighted to see how well you looked, and how reasonably well I stood. . . . I am sure I shall never come back home except to die; I may do it, but shall always think of the move as suicidal, unless a great change comes over me, of which as yet I see no symptom. This visit to Sydney has smashed me handsomely; and yet I made myself a prisoner here in the club upon my first arrival. This is not encouraging for further ventures; Sydney winter—or, I might almost say, Sydney spring, for I came when the worst was over—is so small an affair, comparable to our June depression at home in Scotland. . . . The pipe is right again; it was the springs that had rusted, and ought to have been oiled. Its voice is now that of an angel; but, Lord! here in the club I dare not wake it! Conceive my impatience to be in my own backwoods and raise the sound of minstrelsy. What pleasures are to be compared with those of the Unvirtuous Virtuoso.—Yours ever affectionately, the Unvirtuous Virtuoso,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO MRS. THOMAS STEVENSON

Steamer Janet Nicoll *
[*Spring*, 1890]

MY DEAR MOTHER,—The lively *Jane* as she is called by those who know her is just illustrating her skittishness, and my hand of write suffers in consequence. We have a most agreeable ship's company; the start has stopped my lung symptoms almost entirely, but I have had as yet no change of climate, as we are going to Auckland, and to-night it rains and blows, and the *Janet Janetises;* you never saw so quick a roller. I am beginning this under these untoward circumstances to have it ready for Auckland; and I can only hope the pencil may remain legible. The party is the captain, a very mild German; Henderson, a very nice fellow like Chandler whom we met on the

* In the margin of the letter is written, "Auckland, April, 1890," in another handwriting.

Ludgate Hill, but he may leave us at Auckland ; Stoddard, engineer, frae Glesgie ; Heard, supercargo, frae Aiberdeen ; Jack Buckland, a strange Sydney T. . fite and (at the same time, or rather in alternate layers) Gilbert Island Beachcomber, admirably good-looking and really nice in his way ; indeed the whole lot is first rate. On the back I am going to give you a plan of some of the ship, which of course (near 500 tons) is a mighty fine affair for the likes of us ; or would be, if she could be induced to stop rolling and wallowing like a drunken tub. The o's are dead lights. 1. Main cabin. 2. Our stateroom. 3. Lloyd and Buckland. 4. Henderson. 5. Heard. 6. W.C. 7. Companion. The main cabin is 15 feet long, 7 ft. headroom. Above the cabin is a spar deck and above that again the bridge ; abaft the cabins are the galley and the engines. It is very pleasant to have the engines behind ; but there is no use in trying to blink the fact that the *Janet* is a pig. I never saw such a roller. Again, last night since I began to write, I was nearly thrown out of my bunk, and so was Buckland ; and eating is a toil and trial. Our route is Savage, Semaroff (?) Wauihiki, Penrhyn (?), Christmas, Danger Islands, Tokalaus, Ellias, Gilberts, Marshalls, and afterwards we are in doubt. You can look 'em up on the map. Xmas is doubtful, but possible ; the others named (bar accident) certain ; you see what a space we are to cover, though it's all low island again. I shall know something of the Pacific now. I am, dear mother,

Ever your afft. son,

R. L. S.

To Sidney Colvin

To try and recover from the effects of his illness at Sydney, Stevenson determined to take another voyage ; and started accordingly in April with his party on a trading steamer, the *Janet Nicoll*, which took him by a long and devious course among many groups of islands that he had not yet visited, returning to Sydney in August by way of New Caledonia. On the first night out of Auckland harbour the voyage nearly came to a premature end

through the blowing up of some trade fireworks, or materials for fireworks, which had been packed in the stateroom.

S.S. Janet Nicoll, *off Upolu* [*Spring*, 1890]

MY DEAREST COLVIN,—I was sharply ill at Sydney, cut off, right out of bed, in this steamer on a fresh island cruise, and have already reaped the benefit. We are excellently found this time, on a spacious vessel, with an excellent table; the captain, supercargo, our one fellow-passenger, etc., very nice; and the charterer, Mr. Henderson, the very man I could have chosen. The truth is, I fear, this life is the only one that suits me; so long as I cruise in the South Seas, I shall be well and happy—alas, no, I do not mean that, and *absit omen!*—I mean that, so soon as I cease from cruising, the nerves are strained, the decline commences, and I steer slowly but surely back to bedward. We left Sydney, had a cruel rough passage to Auckland, for the *Janet* is the worst roller I was ever aboard of. I was confined to my cabin, ports closed, self shied out of the berth, stomach (pampered till the day I left on a diet of perpetual egg-nogg) revolted at ship's food and ship eating, in a frowsy bunk, clinging with one hand to the plate, with the other to the glass, and using the knife and fork (except at intervals) with the eyelid. No matter: I picked up hand over hand. After a day in Auckland, we set sail again; were blown up in the main cabin with calcium fires, as we left the bay. Let no man say I am unscientific: when I ran, on the alert, out of my state-room, and found the main cabin incarnadined with the glow of the last scene of a pantomime, I stopped dead: "What is this?" said I. "This ship is on fire, I see that; but why a pantomime?" And I stood and reasoned the point, until my head was so muddled with the fumes that I could not find the companion. A few seconds later, the captain had to enter crawling on his belly, and took days to recover (if he has recovered) from the fumes. By singular good fortune, we got the hose down in time and saved the ship, but Lloyd lost most of his clothes and a great part of our photographs was destroyed. Fanny saw the native sailors tossing over-

board a blazing trunk; she stopped them in time, and behold it contained my manuscripts. Thereafter we had three (or two) days fine weather: then got into a gale of wind, with rain and a vexatious sea. As we drew into our anchorage in a bight of Savage Island, a man ashore told me afterwards the sight of the *Janet Nicoll* made him sick; and indeed it was rough play, though nothing to the night before. All through this gale I worked four to six hours per diem, spearing the ink-bottle like a flying fish, and holding my papers together as I might. For, of all things, what I was at was history—the Samoan business—and I had to turn from one to another of these piles of manuscript notes, and from one page to another in each, until I should have found employment for the hands of Briareus. All the same, this history is a godsend for a voyage; I can put in time, getting events co-ordinated and the narrative distributed, when my much-heaving numskull would be incapable of finish or fine style. At Savage we met the missionary barque *John Williams*. I tell you it was a great day for Savage Island: the path up the cliffs was crowded with gay islandresses (I like that feminine plural) who wrapped me in their embraces, and picked my pockets of all my tobacco, with a manner which a touch would have made revolting, but as it was, was simply charming, like the Golden Age. One pretty, little, stalwart minx, with a red flower behind her ear, had searched me with extraordinary zeal; and when, soon after, I missed my matches, I accused her (she still following us) of being the thief. After some delay, and with a subtle smile, she produced the box, gave me *one match*, and put the rest away again. Too tired to add more.—Your most affectionate

R. L. S.

To E. L. Burlingame

The idea here discussed of a further series of essays to be contributed to *Scribner's Magazine* was never carried out.

S.S. Janet Nicoll, *off Peru Island, Kingsmills Group, July 13th, '90*

MY DEAR BURLINGAME,—I am moved to write to you in the matter of the end papers. I am somewhat tempted to begin them again. Follow the reasons *pro* and *con* :—

1st. I must say I feel as if something in the nature of the end paper were a desirable finish to the number, and that the substitutes of occasional essays by occasional contributors somehow fail to fill the bill. Should you differ with me on this point, no more is to be said. And what follows must be regarded as lost words.

2nd. I am rather taken with the idea of continuing the work. For instance, should you have no distaste for papers of the class called *Random Memories*, I should enjoy continuing them (of course at intervals), and when they were done I have an idea they might make a readable book. On the other hand, I believe a greater freedom of choice might be taken, the subjects more varied and more briefly treated, in somewhat approaching the manner of Andrew Lang in the *Sign of the Ship ;* it being well understood that the broken sticks * method is one not very suitable (as Colonel Burke would say) to my genius, and not very likely to be pushed far in my practice. Upon this point I wish you to condense your massive brain. In the last lot I was promised, and I fondly expected to receive, a vast amount of assistance from intelligent and genial correspondents. I assure you, I never had a scratch of a pen from any one above the level of a village idiot, except once, when a lady sowed my head full of grey hairs by announcing that she was going to direct her life in future by my counsels. Will the correspondents be more copious and less irrelevant in the future ? Suppose that to be the case, will they be of any use to me in my place of exile ? Is it possible for a man in Samoa to be in touch with the great heart of the People ? And is it not perhaps a mere folly to attempt, from so hopeless a distance, anything

* French *bâtons rompus :* disconnected thoughts or studies.

so delicate as a series of papers? Upon these points, perpend, and give me the results of your perpensions.

3rd. The emolument would be agreeable to your humble servant.

I have now stated all the *pros*, and the most of the *cons* are come in by the way. There follows, however, one immense *Con* (with a capital "C"), which I beg you to consider particularly. I fear that, to be of any use for your magazine, these papers should begin with the beginning of a volume. Even supposing my hands were free, this would be now impossible for next year. You have to consider whether, supposing you have no other objection, it would be worth while to begin the series in the middle of a volume, or desirable to delay the whole matter until the beginning of another year.

Now supposing that the *cons* have it, and you refuse my offer, let me make another proposal, which you will be very inclined to refuse at the first off-go, but which I really believe might in time come to something. You know how the penny papers have their answers to correspondents. Why not do something of the same kind for the "culchawed"? Why not get men like Stimson, Brownell, Professor James, Goldwin Smith, and others who will occur to you more readily than to me, to put and to answer a series of questions of intellectual and general interest, until at last you should have established a certain standard of matter to be discussed in this part of the Magazine?

I want you to get me bound volumes of the Magazine from its start. The Lord knows I have had enough copies; where they are I know not. A wandering author gathers no magazines.

The Wrecker is in no forrader state than in last reports. I have indeed got to a period when I cannot well go on until I can refresh myself on the proofs of the beginning. My respected collaborator, who handles the machine which is now addressing you, has indeed carried his labours farther, but not, I am led to understand, with what we used to call a blessing; at least, I have been refused a sight

of his latest labours. However, there is plenty of time ahead, and I feel no anxiety about the tale, except that it may meet with your approval.

All this voyage I have been busy over my *Travels*, which, given a very high temperature and the saloon of a steamer usually going before the wind, and with the cabins in front of the engines, has come very near to prostrating me altogether. You will therefore understand that there are no more poems. I wonder whether there are already enough, and whether you think that such a volume would be worth the publishing? I shall hope to find in Sydney some expression of your opinion on this point. Living as I do among—not the most cultured of mankind ("splendidly educated and perfect gentlemen when sober")—I attach a growing importance to friendly criticisms from yourself.

I believe that this is the most of our business. As for my health, I got over my cold in a fine style, but have not been very well of late. To my unaffected annoyance, the blood-spitting has started again. I find the heat of a steamer decidedly wearing and trying in these latitudes, and I am inclined to think the superior expedition rather dearly paid for. Still, the fact that one does not even remark the coming of a squall, nor feel relief on its departure, is a mercy not to be acknowledged without gratitude. The rest of the family seem to be doing fairly well; both seem less run down than they were on the *Equator*, and Mrs. Stevenson very much less so. We have now been three months away, have visited about thirty-five islands, many of which were novel to us, and some extremely entertaining; some also were old acquaintances, and pleasant to revisit. In the meantime, we have really a capital time aboard the ship, in the most pleasant and interesting society, and with (considering the length and nature of the voyage) an excellent table. Please remember us all to Mr. Scribner, the young chieftain of the house, and the lady, whose health I trust is better. To Mrs. Burlingame we all desire to be remembered, and I hope you will give our news to Low, St. Gaudens,

Faxon, and others of the faithful in the city. I shall probably return to Samoa direct, having given up all idea of returning to civilisation in the meanwhile. There, on my ancestral acres which I purchased six months ago from a blind Scots blacksmith, you will please address me until further notice. The name of the ancestral acres is going to be Vailima; but as at the present moment nobody else knows the name, except myself and the co-patentees, it will be safer, if less ambitious, to address R. L. S., Apia, Samoa. The ancestral acres run to upwards of three hundred; they enjoy the ministrations of five streams, whence the name. They are all at the present moment under a trackless covering of magnificent forest, which would be worth a great deal if it grew beside a railway terminus. To me, as it stands, it represents a handsome deficit. Obliging natives from the Cannibal Islands are now cutting it down at my expense. You would be able to run your magazine to much greater advantage if the terms of authors were on the same scale with those of my cannibals. We have also a house about the size of a manufacturer's lodge. 'Tis but the egg of the future palace, over the details of which on paper Mrs. Stevenson and I have already shed real tears; what it will be when it comes to paying for it, I leave you to imagine. But if it can only be built as now intended, it will be with genuine satisfaction and a growunded pride that I shall welcome you at the steps of my Old Colonial Home, when you land from the steamer on a long-merited holiday. I speak much at my ease; yet I do not know, I may be now an outlaw, a bankrupt, the abhorred of all good men. I do not know, you probably do. Has Hyde * turned upon me? Have I fallen like Danvers Carew?

It is suggested to me that you might like to know what will be my future society. Three consuls, all at loggerheads with one another, or at the best in a clique of two against one; three different sects of missionaries, not upon the best of terms; and the Catholics and Protestants in

* The Rev. Dr. Hyde, of Honolulu: in reference to Stevenson's letter on Father Damien.

a condition of unhealable ill-feeling as to whether a wooden drum ought or ought not to be beaten to announce the time of school. The native population, very genteel, very songful, very agreeable, very good-looking, chronically spoiling for a fight (a circumstance not to be entirely neglected in the design of the palace). As for the white population of (technically, " The Beach "), I don't suppose it is possible for any person not thoroughly conversant with the South Seas to form the smallest conception of such a society, with its grog-shops, its apparently unemployed hangers-on, its merchants of all degrees of respectability and the reverse. The paper, of which I must really send you a copy—if yours were really a live magazine, you would have an exchange with the editor: I assure you, it has of late contained a great deal of matter about one of your contributors—rejoices in the name of *Samoa Times and South Sea Advertiser*. The advertisements in the *Advertiser* are permanent, being simply subsidies for its existence. A dashing warfare of newspaper correspondence goes on between the various residents, who are rather fond of recurring to one another's antecedents. But when all is said, there are a lot of very nice, pleasant people, and I don't know that Apia is very much worse than half a hundred towns that I could name.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

TO CHARLES BAXTER

As above indicated, on the way between Samoa and Sydney Stevenson left the *Janet Nicoll* for a week's stay in New Caledonia, during which he was hospitably received by the French officials.

Hotel Sebastopol, Noumea, August, 1890

MY DEAR CHARLES,—I have stayed here a week while Lloyd and my wife continue to voyage in the *Janet Nicoll*; this I did, partly to see the convict system, partly to shorten my stay in the extreme cold—hear me with my extreme! *moi qui suis originaire d'Edimbourg*—of Sydney at this season. I am feeling very seedy, utterly fatigued, and

overborne with sleep. I have a fine old gentleman of a doctor, who attends and cheers and entertains, if he does not cure me; but even with his ministrations I am almost incapable of the exertion sufficient for this letter; and I am really, as I write, falling down with sleep. What is necessary to say, I must try to say shortly. Lloyd goes to clear out our establishments: pray keep him in funds, if I have any; if I have not, pray try to raise them. Here is the idea: to install ourselves, at the risk of bankruptcy, in Samoa. It is not the least likely it will pay (although it may); but it is almost certain it will support life, with very few external expenses. If I die, it will be an endowment for the survivors, at least for my wife and Lloyd; and my mother, who might prefer to go home, has her own. Hence I believe I shall do well to hurry my installation. The letters are already in part done; in part done is a novel for Scribner; in the course of the next twelve months I should receive a considerable amount of money. I am aware I had intended to pay back to my capital some of this. I am now of opinion I should act foolishly. Better to build the house and have a roof and farm of my own; and thereafter, with a livelihood assured, save and prepay. . . . There is my livelihood, all but books and wine, ready in a nutshell; and it ought to be more easy to save and to repay afterwards. Excellent, say you, but will you save and will you repay? I do not know, said the Bell of Old Bow. . . . It seems clear to me. . . . The deuce of the affair is that I do not know when I shall see you and Colvin. I guess you will have to come and see me: many a time already we have arranged the details of your visit in the yet unbuilt house on the mountain. I shall be able to get decent wine from Noumea. We shall be able to give you a decent welcome, and talk of old days. *Apropos* of old days, do you remember still the phrase we heard in Waterloo Place? I believe you made a piece for the piano on that phrase. Pray, if you remember it, send it me in your next. If you find it impossible to write correctly, send it me *à la récitative*, and indicate the accents. Do you feel (you must) how

strangely heavy and stupid I am? I must at last give up and go sleep. I am simply a rag.

The morrow.—I feel better, but still dim and groggy. To-night I go to the governor's; such a lark—no dress clothes—twenty-four hours' notice—able-bodied Polish tailor—suit made for a man with the figure of a puncheon—same hastily altered for self with the figure of a bodkin—sight inconceivable. Never mind; dress clothes, "which nobody can deny"; and the officials have been all so civil that I liked neither to refuse nor to appear in mufti. Bad dress clothes only prove you are a grisly ass; no dress clothes, even when explained, indicate a want of respect. I wish you were here with me to help me dress in this wild raiment, and to accompany me to M. Noel-Pardon's. I cannot say what I would give if there came a knock now at the door and you came in. I guess Noel-Pardon would go begging, and we might burn the fr. 200 dress clothes in the back garden for a bonfire; or what would be yet more expensive and more humorous, get them once more expanded to fit you, and when that was done, a second time cut down for my gossamer dimensions.

I hope you never forget to remember me to your father, who has always a place in my heart, as I hope I have a little in his. His kindness helped me infinitely when you and I were young; I recall it with gratitude and affection in this town of convicts at the world's end. There are very few things, my dear Charles, worth mention: on a retrospect of life, the day's flash and colour, one day with another, flames, dazzles, and puts to sleep; and when the days are gone, like a fast-flying thaumatrope, they make but a single pattern. Only a few things stand out; and among these—most plainly to me—Rutland Square.—Ever, my dear Charles, your affectionate friend,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—Just returned from trying on the dress clo'. Lord, you should see the coat! It stands out at the waist like a bustle, the flaps cross in front, the sleeves are like bags.

To E. L. Burlingame

Proceeding from New Caledonia to Sydney, Stevenson again made a stay there of about a month, before going to settle in his new island home and superintend the operations of planting and building. The next letter is in acknowledgment of proofs received from Messrs. Scribner of a proposed volume of verse to contain, besides *Ticonderoga* and the two ballads on Marquesan and Tahitian legends, a number of the other miscellaneous verses which he had written in the course of his travels. In the end, the ballads only stood for publication at this time; the other verses were reserved, and have been posthumously published under the title *Songs of Travel*.

Union Club, Sydney [*August*, 1890]

My dear Burlingame,—

Ballads.

The deuce is in this volume. It has cost me more botheration and dubiety than any other I ever took in hand. On one thing my mind is made up: the verses at the end have no business there, and throw them down. Many of them are bad, many of the rest want nine years' keeping, and the remainder are not relevant—throw them down; some I never want to hear of more, others will grow in time towards decent items in a second *Underwoods*—and in the meanwhile, down with them! At the same time, I have a sneaking idea the ballads are not altogether without merit—I don't know if they're poetry, but they're good narrative, or I'm deceived. (You've never said one word about them, from which I astutely gather you are dead set against: "he was a diplomatic man"—extract from epitaph of E. L. B.—"and remained on good terms with Minor Poets.") You will have to judge: one of the Gladstonian trinity of paths must be chosen. (1st) Either publish the five ballads, such as they are, in a volume called *Ballads;* in which case pray send sheets at once to Chatto and Windus. Or (2nd) write and tell me you think the book too small, and I'll try and get into the mood to do some more. Or (3rd) write and tell me the whole thing is a blooming illusion; in which case draw off

some twenty copies for my private entertainment, and charge me with the expense of the whole dream.

In the matter of rhyme no man can judge himself; I am at the world's end, have no one to consult, and my publisher holds his tongue. I call it unfair and almost unmanly. I do indeed begin to be filled with animosity; Lord, wait till you see the continuation of *The Wrecker*, when I introduce some New York publishers. . . . It's a good scene; the quantities you drink and the really hideous language you are represented as employing may perhaps cause you one tithe of the pain you have inflicted by your silence on, sir, The Poetaster,

R. L. S.

Lloyd is off home; my wife and I dwell sundered: she in lodgings, preparing for the move; I here in the club, and at my old trade—bedridden. Naturally, the visit home is given up; we only wait our opportunity to get to Samoa, where, please, address me.

Have I yet asked you to despatch the books and papers left in your care to me at Apia, Samoa? I wish you would, *quam primum*.

R. L. S.

To Henry James

Union Club, Sydney, August, 1890

My dear Henry James,—Kipling is too clever to live. The *Bête Humaine** I had already perused in Noumea, listening the while to the strains of the convict band. He is a Beast; but not human, and, to be frank, not very interesting. "Nervous maladies: the homicidal ward," would be the better name: O, this game gets very tedious.

Your two long and kind letters have helped to entertain the old familiar sickbed. So has a book called *The Bondman*, by Hall Caine; I wish you would look at it. I am not half-way through yet. Read the book, and communicate your views. Hall Caine, by the way, appears to take

* By Émile Zola.

Hugo's view of History and Chronology. (*Later ;* the book doesn't keep up ; it gets very wild.)

I must tell you plainly—I can't tell Colvin—I do not think I shall come to England more than once, and then it'll be to die. Health I enjoy in the tropics ; even here, which they call sub- or semi-tropics, I come only to catch cold. I have not been out since my arrival ; live here in a nice bedroom by the fireside, and read books and letters from Henry James, and send out to get his *Tragic Muse*, only to be told they can't be had as yet in Sydney, and have altogether a placid time. But I can't go out ! The thermometer was nearly down to 50° the other day—no temperature for me, Mr. James : how should I do in England ? I fear not at all. Am I very sorry ? I am sorry about seven or eight people in England, and one or two in the States. And outside of that, I simply prefer Samoa. These are the words of honesty and soberness. (I am fasting from all but sin, coughing, *The Bondman*, a couple of eggs and a cup of tea.) I was never fond of towns, houses, society, or (it seems) civilisation. Nor yet it seems was I ever very fond of (what is technically called) God's green earth. The sea, islands, the islanders, the island life and climate, make and keep me truly happier. These last two years I have been much at sea, and I have *never wearied ;* sometimes I have indeed grown impatient for some destination ; more often I was sorry that the voyage drew so early to an end ; and never once did I lose my fidelity to blue water and a ship. It is plain, then, that for me my exile to the place of schooners and islands can be in no sense regarded as a calamity.

Good-bye just now : I must take a turn at my proofs.

N.B.—Even my wife has weakened about the sea. She wearied, the last time we were ashore, to get afloat again.—Yours ever,

R. L. S.

To Marcel Schwob

Union Club, Sydney, August 19th, 1890

My dear Mr. Schwob,—*Mais, alors, vous avez tous les bonheurs, vous!* More about Villon; it seems incredible: when it is put in order, pray send it me.

You wish to translate *The Black Arrow:* dear sir, you are hereby authorised; but I warn you, I do not like the work. Ah, if you, who know so well both tongues, and have taste and instruction—if you would but take a fancy to translate a book of mine that I myself admired—for we sometimes admire our own—or I do—with what satisfaction would the authority be granted! But these things are too much to expect. *Vous ne détestez pas alors mes bonnes femmes? moi, je les déteste.* I have never pleased myself with any women of mine save two character parts, one of only a few lines—the Countess of Rosen—and Madame Desprez in *The Treasure of Franchard.*

I had indeed one moment of pride about my poor *Black Arrow:* Dickon Crookback I did, and I do, think is a spirited and possible figure. Shakespeare's—O, if we can call that cocoon Shakespeare!—Shakespeare's is spirited—one likes to see the untaught athlete butting against the adamantine ramparts of human nature, head down, breach up; it reminds us how trivial we are to-day, and what safety resides in our triviality. For spirited it may be, but O, sure not possible! I love Dumas and I love Shakespeare: you will not mistake me when I say that the Richard of the one reminds me of the Porthos of the other; and if by any sacrifice of my own literary baggage I could clear the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* of Porthos, *Jekyll* might go, and the *Master*, and the *Black Arrow*, you may be sure, and I should think my life not lost for mankind if half a dozen more of my volumes must be thrown in.

The tone of your pleasant letters makes me egotistical; you make me take myself too gravely. Comprehend how I have lived much of my time in France, and loved your country, and many of its people, and all the time

was learning that which your country has to teach—breathing in rather that atmosphere of art which can only there be breathed; and all the time knew—and raged to know—that I might write with the pen of angels or of heroes, and no Frenchman be the least the wiser! And now steps in M. Marcel Schwob, writes me the most kind encouragement, and reads and understands, and is kind enough to like my work.

I am just now overloaded with work. I have two huge novels on hand—*The Wrecker* and *The Pearl Fisher*,* in collaboration with my stepson: the latter, *The Pearl Fisher*, I think highly of, for a black, ugly, trampling, violent story, full of strange scenes and striking characters. And then I am about waist-deep in my big book on the South Seas: *the* big book on the South Seas it ought to be, and shall. And besides, I have some verses in the press, which, however, I hesitate to publish. For I am no judge of my own verse; self-deception is there so facile. All this and the cares of an impending settlement in Samoa keep me very busy, and a cold (as usual) keeps me in bed.

Alas, I shall not have the pleasure to see you yet a while, if ever. You must be content to take me as a wandering voice, and in the form of occasional letters from recondite islands: and address me, if you will be good enough to write, to Apia, Samoa. My stepson, Mr. Osbourne, goes home meanwhile to arrange some affairs; it is not unlikely he may go to Paris to arrange about the illustrations to my South Seas; in which case I shall ask him to call upon you, and give you some word of our outlandish destinies. You will find him intelligent, I think; and I am sure, if (*par hasard*) you should take any interest in the islands, he will have much to tell you.—Herewith I conclude, and am your obliged and interested correspondent,

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

P.S.—The story you refer to has got lost in the post.

* Afterwards named *The Ebb-Tide*.

To Andrew Lang

Union Club, Sydney [*August*, 1890]

My dear Lang,—I observed with a great deal of surprise and interest that a controversy in which you have been taking sides at home, in yellow London, hinges in part at least on the Gilbert Islanders and their customs in burial. Nearly six months of my life has been passed in the group: I have revisited it but the other day; and I make haste to tell you what I know. The upright stones—I enclose you a photograph of one on Apemama—are certainly connected with religion; I do not think they are adored. They stand usually on the windward shore of the islands, that is to say, apart from habitation (on *enclosed islands*, where the people live on the sea side I do not know how it is, never having lived on one). I gathered from Tembinoka, Rex Apemamae, that the pillars were supposed to fortify the island from invasion: spiritual martellos. I think he indicated they were connected with the cult of Tenti—pronounce almost as chintz in English, the *t* being explosive; but you must take this with a grain of salt, for I know no word of Gilbert Island; and the King's English, although creditable, is rather vigorous than exact. Now, here follows the point of interest to you: such pillars, or standing stones, have no connection with graves. The most elaborate grave that I have ever seen in the group—to be certain—is in the form of a *raised border* of gravel usually strewn with broken glass. One—of which I cannot be sure that it was a grave, for I was told by one that it was, and by another that it was not—consisted of a mound about breast high in an excavated taro swamp, on the top of which was a child's house, or rather *maniapa*—that is to say, shed, or open house, such as is used in the group for social or political gatherings—so small that only a child could creep under its eaves. I have heard of another great tomb on Apemama, which I did not see; but here again, by all accounts, no sign of a standing stone. My report would be—no connection

between standing stones and sepulture. I shall, however, send on the terms of the problem to a highly intelligent resident trader, who knows more than perhaps any one living, white or native, of the Gilbert group; and you shall have the result. In Samoa, whither I return for good, I shall myself make inquiries; up to now, I have neither seen nor heard of any standing stones in that group.—Yours,

R. L. STEVENSON.

TO MISS BOODLE

Exactly what tale of doings in the garret at Skerryvore had been related to Stevenson (in the character of Robin Lewison) by his correspondent (in the character of Miss Green) cannot well be gathered from this reply. But the letter is interesting as containing the only mention of certain schemes of romance afterwards abandoned.

Union Club, Sydney, 1st September, 1890

MY DEAR MISS BOODLE,—I find you have been behaving very ill: *been* very ill, in fact. I find this hard to forgive; probably should not forgive it at all if Robin Lewison had not been sick himself and a wretched sick-room prisoner in this club for near a month. Well, the best and bravest sometimes fail. But who is Miss Green? Don't know her! I knew a lady of an exceedingly generous and perfervid nature—worthy to be suspected of Scotch blood for the perfervidness—equipped with a couple—perhaps a brace sounds better English—of perfervid eyes—with a certain graceful gaucherie of manner, almost like a child's, and that is at once the highest point of gaucherie and grace—a friend everybody I ever saw was delighted to see come and sorry to see go. Yes, I knew that lady, and can see her now. But who was Miss Green? There is something amiss here. Either the Robin Lewisons have been very shabbily treated, or—and this is the serious part of the affair—somebody unknown to me has been entrusted with the key of the Skerryvore garret. This may go as far as the Old Bailey, ma'am.

But why should I gird at you or anybody, when the truth is we are the most miserable sinners in the world? For we are not coming home, I dare not. Even coming to Sydney has made me quite ill, and back I go to Samoa, whither please address—Apia, Samoa—(and remember it is Sámó-a, a spondee to begin with, or Sahmoa, if you prefer that writing)—back I and my wife go to Samoa to live on our landed estate with four black labour boys in a kind of a sort of house, which Lloyd will describe to you. For he has gone to England: receive him like a favour and a piece of cake; he is our greeting to friends.

I paused here to put in the date on the first page. I am precious nearly through my fortieth year, thinks I to myself. Must be nearly as old as Miss Green, thinks I. O, come! I exclaimed, not as bad as that! Some lees of youth about the old remnant yet.

My amiable Miss Green, I beg you to give me news of your health, and if it may be good news. And when you shall have seen Lloyd, to tell me how his reports of the South Seas and our new circumstances strike such an awfully old person as yourself, and to tell me if you ever received a letter I sent you from Hawaii. I remember thinking—or remember remembering rather—it was (for me) quite a long respectable communication. Also, you might tell me if you got my war-whoop and scalping-knife assault on *le nommé Hyde*.

I ought not to forget to say your tale fetched me (Miss Green) by its really vile probability. If we had met that man in Honolulu he would have done it, and Miss Green would have done it. Only, alas! there is no completed novel lying in the garret: would there were! It should be out to-morrow with the name to it, and relieve a kind of tightness in the money market much deplored in our immediate circle. To be sure (now I come to think of it) there are some seven chapters of *The Great North Road;* three, I think, of *Robin Run-the-Hedge*, given up when some nefarious person pre-empted the name; and either there—or somewhere else—likely New York—one chapter of *David Balfour*, and five or six of the

Memoirs of Henry Shovel. That's all. But Lloyd and I have one-half of *The Wrecker* in type, and a good part of *The Pearl Fisher* (O, a great and grisly tale that I) in MS. And I have a projected, entirely planned love-story—everybody will think it dreadfully improper, I'm afraid—called *Cannonmills*. And I've a vague, rosy haze before me—a love-story too, but not improper—called *The Rising Sun*. (It's the name of the wayside inn where the story, or much of the story, runs; but it's a kind of a pun: it means the stirring up of a boy by falling in love, and how he rises in the estimation of a girl who despised him, though she liked him, and had befriended him; I really scarce see beyond their childhood yet, but I want to go beyond, and make each out-top the other by successions: it should be pretty and true if I could do it.) Also I have my big book, *The South Seas*, always with me, and a sair handfu'—if I may be allowed to speak Scotch to Miss Green—a sair handfu' it is likely to be. All this literary gossip I bestow upon you *entre confrères*, Miss Green, which is little more than fair, Miss Green.

Allow me to remark that it is now half-past twelve o'clock of the living night; I should certainly be ashamed of myself, and you also; for this is no time of the night for Miss Green to be colloguing with a comparatively young gentleman of forty. So with all the kindest wishes to yourself, and all at Lostock, and all friends in Hants, or over the borders in Dorset, I bring my folly to an end. Please believe, even when I am silent, in my real affection; I need not say the same for Fanny, more obdurately silent, not less affectionate than I.—Your friend,

ROBERT—ROBIN LEWISON.

(Nearly had it wrong—force of habit.)

TO MRS. CHARLES FAIRCHILD

Union Club, Sydney [*September*, 1890]

MY DEAR MRS. FAIRCHILD,—I began a letter to you on board the *Janet Nicoll* on my last cruise, wrote, I believe,

two sheets, and ruthlessly destroyed the flippant trash. Your last has given me great pleasure and some pain, for it increased the consciousness of my neglect. Now, this must go to you, whatever it is like.

. . . It is always harshness that one regrets. . . . I regret also my letter to Dr. Hyde. Yes, I do; I think it was barbarously harsh; if I did it now, I would defend Damien no less well, and give less pain to those who are alive. These promptings of good-humour are not all sound; the three times three, cheer boys, cheer, and general amiability business rests on a sneaking love of popularity, the most insidious enemy of virtue. On the whole, it was virtuous to defend Damien; but it was harsh to strike so hard at Dr. Hyde. When I wrote the letter, I believed he would bring an action, in which case I knew I could be beggared. And as yet there has come no action; the injured Doctor has contented himself up to now with the (truly innocuous) vengeance of calling me a "Bohemian Crank," and I have deeply wounded one of his colleagues whom I esteemed and liked.

Well, such is life. You are quite right; our civilisation is a hollow fraud, all the fun of life is lost by it; all it gains is that a larger number of persons can continue to be contemporaneously unhappy on the surface of the globe. O, unhappy!—there is a big word and a false—continue to be not nearly—by about twenty per cent.—so happy as they might be: that would be nearer the mark.

When—observe that word, which I will write again and larger—WHEN you come to see us in Samoa, you will see for yourself a healthy and happy people.

You see, you are one of the very few of our friends rich enough to come and see us; and when my house is built, and the road is made, and we have enough fruit planted and poultry and pigs raised, it is undeniable that you must come—must is the word; that is the way in which I speak to ladies. You and Fairchild, anyway—perhaps my friend Blair—we'll arrange details in good time. It will be the salvation of your souls, and make you willing to die.

Let me tell you this: In '74 or 5 there came to stay with my father and mother a certain Mr. Seed, a prime minister or something of New Zealand. He spotted what my complaint was; told me that I had no business to stay in Europe; that I should find all I cared for, and all that was good for me, in the Navigator Islands; sat up till four in the morning persuading me, demolishing my scruples. And I resisted · I refused to go so far from my father and mother. O, it was virtuous, and O, wasn't it silly! But my father, who was always my dearest, got to his grave without that pang; and now in 1890, I (or what is left of me) go at last to the Navigator Islands. God go with us! It is but a Pisgah sight when all is said; I go there only to grow old and die; but when you come, you will see it is a fair place for the purpose.

Flaubert * has not turned up; I hope he will soon; I knew of him only through Maxime Descamps.—With kindest messages to yourself and all of yours, I remain

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

* His *Letters*.

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